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THE  
**DESTROYER**

A TALE OF

**GUILT AND SORROW;**

---

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TEN THOUSAND A-YEAR."

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BOSTON:  
BRAINARD & CO., 13 COURT STREET.  
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1843.



*From Mrs Saige  
to Laura Walker*

# THE DESTROYER;

A TALE OF

GUILT AND SORROW.

*Warren Sewall*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TEN THOUSAND A-YEAR."

"Terribly beautiful the serpent lay,  
Wreathed like a coronet of gold and jewels  
Fit for a tyrant's brow; anon he flew —"

BOSTON:

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1843.

DEWEY PAPERS

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## FAIR AND INNOCENT READER :

How many, many thousands of you will read this narrative with beating and indignant hearts! Shrink not from its sad, its faithful details; consider them, if it be not presumptuously spoken, in somewhat of that spirit in which you ponder the mournful history of Eve and Eden: of her, our first mother, who weakly listening to the serpent tempter, was ignominiously thrust out of her bright abode, degraded from her blessed estate, and entailed innumerable ills upon her hapless progeny!

With kindly and fervent feeling, my conscience bearing testimony to the purity of my intentions, have I drawn up, and now thus commend to you: to readers, indeed, of both sexes, and of all classes of society, this narrative of a late Physician: of one who, could his eye detect among you one whose trembling foot was uplifted to deviate from the path of honor and of virtue, would whisper, amidst his reluctant adieus — **B E W A R E !**



# THE DESTROYER.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE HEROINE.

MRS. ST. HELEN, a young, a fond, and beautiful mother, having, one morning in June, 18—, observed a faint flush on the forehead of her infant son, — her first-born and only child, and ascertained from the nursery-maid that he had been rather restless during the night, persuaded herself and her husband that matters were serious enough to require immediate medical assistance from London. The worthy Colonel, therefore, ordered his phaeton to be at the door by ten o'clock; and having been scarcely allowed by his anxious wife to swallow a cup of coffee and finish his egg, presently jumped into his vehicle and dashed off almost as rapidly as Mrs. St. Helen, who remained standing on the steps, could have wished. Though the distance was nearly nine miles, he reached my house by a little after eleven, and was at once shown into my room, where I was arranging my list of daily visits. It seemed clear, from his hurried statement, that his little son and heir was about to encounter the perils of scarlet fever or measles, at the very least; and such were his importunities, that though I had several special engagements for

the early part of the day, I was induced, at his suggestion, to put two hacks to my carriage, and drive down to Densleigh Grange, accompanied by the Colonel, who ordered his servant to remain in town till the horses had been rested.

This was the first time that my professional services had been required in Colonel St. Helen's family — in fact, I had never been at Densleigh, though, previous to their marriage, I had been rather intimately acquainted with Mrs. St. Helen. We had never once met, even since the day of her marriage, three years ago. When I last saw her — upon that happy occasion — I thought her certainly one of the loveliest young women the eye could look upon. I really think her person and manners were the most fascinating I ever witnessed. When first I saw her she was only seventeen, and dressed in the deepest mourning, for her father, the Honorable Mr. Annesley, a beneficed clergyman in the west of England, had recently died, leaving her to the care of his brother, the Earl of Hetheringham, whose family I was then attending. Her mother had died about a year after giving

birth to this her first and only child ; and her father left nothing behind him but his daughter — and his debts. The former he bequeathed, as I have already intimated, to his brother, who accepted the charge with a very ungracious air. He was a cold, proud man — qualities, however, in which his Countess excelled him — by no means rich, except in children ; of whom he had three sons and five daughters, who instantly recognised in their beautiful cousin a most formidable competitor for the notice of society. And they were right. The form of her features was worthy of the rich commingled expression of sweetness, spirit, and intellect that beamed in them. What passion shone out of her dark, blue eyes ! Her figure, too, was well proportioned and graceful, just budding out into womanhood. She was sitting, when I first saw her, at a little rosewood table, near the Countess, in her boudoir — one hand hung down with a pen in it, while the other supported her forehead, from which her fingers were pressing aside her auburn hair — evidently in a musing mood, which my sudden entrance through the door already standing wide open, put an end to. “ You need not go,” said the Countess coldly, seeing her hastily preparing to shut up her little desk ; “ my niece — Miss Annesley, Doctor ! ” I knew the Countess, her character, and circumstances, well ; this exquisite girl, her niece, and she with five daughter to dispose of ! — Miss Annesley, after slightly acknowledging my salutation, resumed her seat and pen. I could hardly keep my eyes away from her. If she looks so lovely now, in spite of this gloomy dress, thought I, what must she be when she resumes the garb of youthful gaiety and elegance ! Ah, Countess, you may well tremble for your daughters, if this girl is to appear among them. “ You see, Doctor,”

continued the Countess, in a matter-of-fact manner, while these thoughts glanced through my mind — “ we are all thrown into sables through the death of the Earl’s brother, Mr. Annesley.”

“ Indeed ! ” I interrupted, with a look of sympathy towards her niece, who spread her hand over her eyes, while the pen that was in the other slightly quivered. “ This young lady is, in fact, all my poor brother-in-law left behind him ; and ” (adding in a lower tone) “ she now forms one of our *little* family ! ” I felt infinitely hurt at the scarce-concealed sneer with which she uttered the word ‘ little.’ Poor Miss Annesley, I feared, had perceived it ; for, after evidently struggling ineffectually to conceal her emotions, she rose and stepped abruptly towards the door.

“ You’ll find your cousins in the drawing-room ; love ! go and sit with them,” said the Countess, endeavoring to speak affectionately. “ Poor thing ! ” she continued, as soon as Miss Annesley had closed the door, after which I fancied I heard her run rapidly up stairs — doubtless to weep alone in her own room — “ her father has not been dead more than a fortnight, and she feels it acutely ! — shockingly involved, my dear Doctor — over head and ears in debt ! — you’ve no idea how it annoys the Earl ! My niece is perfectly penniless ! Literally, we were obliged to provide the poor thing with mourning ! I insisted on the Earl’s making her one of our family ; ” — a great falsehood, as I subsequently discovered, for she had suggested and urged sending her abroad to a nunnery, which, however inclined to do, he dared not for appearances’ sake. — “ She’ll be a companion for my younger daughters, though she’s quite countryfied at present — don’t you think so ? ”

“ Pardon me, my dear Countess —

she struck me as extremely elegant and beautiful," I answered, with sufficient want of tact.

"Rather pretty, certainly — she's only seventeen, poor thing," drawled the Countess, immediately changing the subject.

I could not help feeling much interest in the poor girl, thrust thus, in the first agonies of her grievous bereavement, into a soil and atmosphere ungenial and even noxious — into a family that at once disliked and dreaded her. What a life seemed before her! But, I reflected, the conflict may be painful, it cannot be long. Lady Hetheringham cannot utterly exclude her niece from society; and there, once seen, she must triumph. And so, indeed, it happened; for in less than six months after the period of her arrival at her uncle's, she began to go out freely into society with his family; it having been considered by her prudent and affectionate relatives, that the sooner this young creature could be got off their hands the better. The Earl and his Countess, indeed, began to feel some apprehensions now and then lest one of their niece's male cousins — the eldest, possibly, might feel rather more attachment towards her than mere relationship required. She was directed, therefore, to apply herself diligently to the completion of her education, in which she had already made rapid progress, which, together with her natural talents, soon rendered her independent of the fashionable instructors who taught her cousins. Miss Annesley was, in truth, a creature of much enthusiasm of character; of a generous and confiding nature, a sanguine temperament — fond withal of admiration, as who is not of either sex? She felt in her element in the glittering society in which she now incessantly appeared, or rather into which she was forced. She breathed freely, for

glorious was the contrast it afforded to the chilling, withering restraint and coldness that ever awaited her at her uncle's. There she but too sorrowfully felt herself an intruder — that her uncle and aunt were stirring heaven and earth to get rid of her. Many a bitter hour did she pass alone when she reflected upon this, and saw no course open to her but to second the exertions of her heartless relatives, and be emancipated from the bitter thralldom by almost any one who chose to make the attempt. Her anxieties on this score laid her open to the imputation of being little more than a brilliant flirt or coquette, than which certainly nothing could be more distant from the wishes or repugnant to the feelings of poor Miss Annesley. She saw that her uncle and aunt could have encouraged the advances of any one that seemed likely to propose for a beautiful but penniless orphan, and was almost disposed to gratify them. What sort of life would not be preferable to that of her present bitter dependence? Alas, how generous, how noble a heart was thus trifled with — was thus endangered, if not even directly betrayed, by those whose sacred duty it was, whose pride and delight it should have been, to regard and cherish it! However pure, however high-minded, a girl of Miss Annesley's youth and inexperience, of her eager and fervent temper and character, could not but be exposed to imminent danger, when thrust thus into such scenes as are afforded by the fashionable society of the metropolis. Poor Emma! No eye of zealous and vigilant affection followed thee when wandering through these dazzling mazes of dissipation and of danger! Anxious, however, as were Lord and Lady Hetheringham to get rid of their lovely charge, their efforts were unsuccessful. Two seasons passed over, and their niece, though the admired



of all beholders, utterly eclipsing her impatient and envious cousins, seemed unlikely to form an alliance, whether owing to the incessant and widely propagated sneers and injurious falsehoods of her five rivals, the ill-disguised coldness and dislike of the Earl and Countess, or, above all, to her want of fortune. Many who admired her, and felt disposed to pay her decisive attentions, were deterred by the fear that a young woman, of her family, station, beauty and accomplishments, was an object far beyond their reach; while others sighed,

“Sighed and looked, sighed and looked, and sighed again;”

and feared, that if she brought her husband no fortune, she nevertheless was perfectly able and disposed to spend his. Conquests, in the ordinary phrase, she made innumerable, and was several times mentioned in the newspapers as “likely to be led to the hymeneal altar” by Lord —, Sir —, the Honorable Mr. —, and so forth. As far, indeed, as appearances went, there was some ground for each of these rumors. Miss Annesley had many followers, most of whom were sufficiently gratified by having their names associated in fashionable rumor with that of so distinguished a beauty. The only one, however, of all these triflers who ever established anything like an interest in her heart, was the elegant and well known Alverley; a man whose fascinating appearance and manners soon distanced the pretensions of all those who aimed at an object he had selected. Alverley was, when he chose, irresistible. He could inspire the woman he sought with a conviction that he loved her passionately, throwing a fervor and devotion into his manner which few, very few women, and no young woman, could resist. Poor Miss Annesley fancied that this envied prize was hers; that he was

destined to be led “a graceful captive at her chariot-wheels;” that he was the gallant knight who was to deliver her from bondage. Here, too, however, she was destined to meet with disappointment; the distinguished Alverley disappeared from among the throng of her admirers quite suddenly; the fact being, that in a confidential conversation with one of her cousins, in a quadrille, he had become satisfied that it was undesirable for him to prosecute any farther his disinterested attentions in that quarter. Miss Annesley felt his defection more keenly than that of any other of her transient admirers. Her eager feelings, her inexperienced heart, would not permit her to see how utterly unworthy was one who could act thus. of even a moment’s regret. Alas! her bright spirit had not fair play! His graceful person, his handsome and expressive features, his fascinating manners, could not so easily be banished from her young heart; and her grief and mortification were but little assuaged, perhaps, however, her wounded pride might be soothed, by the intimation Alverley contrived to have conveyed to her, from several quarters, that her regrets fell infinitely short of the poignancy of his own, in being compelled by others, on whom his all depended, to abandon the dearest hopes he had ever cherished.

Thus it was that Miss Annesley and her heartless and selfish relatives beheld two seasons pass away without any prospect of their being permanently released from one another’s presence and society: an infinite gratification did the poor girl experience in being invited to spend the autumn of 18— with a distant relative of Lady Hetheringham’s, in a remote part of England. This lady was the widow of a general officer, and during her stay in town that season had formed an attachment towards Miss

Annesley, whose painful position in the Earl's family she soon perceived and compassionated; therefore it was that her invitation had been given, and she felt delighted at securing the society of her young and brilliant guest during the tedious autumn and winter months.

Miss Annesley proved herself to be possessed of a warm and affectionate heart, in addition to beauty and accomplishments, and every day increased the attachment between them. These six months were the happiest Miss Annesley had ever known. Before returning to town, an event she dreaded, a very eligible offer of marriage was made to her by a relative of her hostess, who happened to be quartered with his regiment in her immediate neighborhood, Major St. Helen. He was an amiable, high-spirited man, of excellent family, in easy circumstances, and with considerable expectations. His features, though not handsome, were manly and expressive; his figure was tall and commanding, his manners frank, his disposition affectionate; — his suit was supported by Miss An-

nesley's kind hostess, and before her returning to town, he gained the promise of her hand. The more, indeed, she knew of him, and learned of his character, the more confidently she committed herself to him; she became sincerely and affectionately attached to him, who loved her so evidently with fervor and enthusiasm. In about a twelvemonth's time she was married to him — in her twentieth year, he being about ten years her senior, from the Earl of Hetheringham's. I was present, and never saw a lovelier bride; how distinctly, even at this distance of time, is her figure before my mind's eye! As the uncle, who felt as if a thorn had at length been plucked out of his side, led her down to the travelling carriage that was in readiness to convey them away, I was one of the last to whisper a hasty benison into the ear of the trembling blushing girl. Gracious Heaven! could either of us at that moment have lifted the veil of futurity, and foreseen her becoming the subject of this melancholy and dreadful history!

## CHAPTER II.

### MY FIRST CALL.

ABOUT three years afterwards was born the little patient I was now on my way to visit. During this considerable interval I had almost lost sight of them; for Major, since become Colonel St. Helen, after a year's travel on the continent, purchased the delightful residence to which we were so hastily driving, and where their little son and heir was born. Here they lived in delightful retirement — only occasionally, and for very short periods, visiting the metropolis; the chief reason being Mrs. St. Helen's reluctance to renew her intercourse with Lord and Lady Hetheringham, or any member of their family. It was evident from our conversation, as we drove down, that their attachment towards each other continued unabated. The only drawback upon their happiness was a fear that he might be, ere long, summoned upon foreign service. When within about a mile of Densleigh, our conversation, as if by common consent, dropped, and we leaned back in the corners of the carriage in silence; he, doubtless, occupied with anxieties about his little son, and the probable state of matters he should meet on reaching home; I sinking into a reverie upon past times. I was anxious to see again one in whom I had formerly felt such interest, and felt happy at her good fortune, not only in escaping the dangers to which she had been exposed, but in making so happy a marriage.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the Colonel, suddenly, who had been for the last few minutes incessantly putting

his head out of the window — "look — they are" — his keen eye had discovered two female figures standing at the outer gate opening upon the high road — "Drive on, coachman, for God's sake!"

"Don't alarm yourself, Colonel," said I; adding, as we drew near enough to distinguish one of the figures pushing open the gate, and stepping into the road towards us — "for one of them can be no other than Mrs. St. Helen; and the other is her maid, with my little patient in her arms — positively! Ha, ha, Colonel! That looks very much like scarlet fever or measles."

"Certainly you are right," replied the Colonel, with a sigh that seemed to let off all his anxiety. That is my wife indeed, and the child; there can be no mistake — but how can they think of venturing out till, at all events, they are" —

Though I was, at the moment, rather vexed at having come so far, at such inconvenience, too, I soon made up my mind to it, and felt glad at the opportunity of seeing how the beautiful Miss Annesley would show in the character of Mrs. St. Helen — a mother.

"You must give these poor beasts a little refreshment, Colonel, before I can take them back, and me a little luncheon," said I, with a smile, looking at my watch.

"Certainly — oh, of course! Forgive me, dear Doctor, for having been so nervous and precipitate. But you are a father yourself. 'Tis all my



wife's fault, I can assure you, and I shall tell her she must make the apology due for bringing you down from London for nothing. The fact is, that I never thought there was anything the matter with the child; — which was, I thought, a very great mistake of the Colonel's.

"I assure you I am infinitely better pleased to have the opportunity of seeing Mrs. St. Helen again, and in health and spirits, than to see her plunged into distress by the illness of her child — so pray say no more about it."

As we approached, Mrs. St. Helen hastily gave her parasol into the hands of the maid, from whose arms she snatched the child, and walked quickly up to the carriage door, as we drew up. For a moment I quite forgot the errand on which I had come, as close before me stood the Emma Annesley of a former day, a thousand times more lovely to my eye than I had ever seen her. She wore a white loose bonnet, of transparent white crape, and her shawl, which had been displaced in the hurry of seizing the child, hung with graceful negligence over her shoulders, to infinite advantage, displaying a figure of ripening womanhood: the young mother, proud of the beautiful infant she bore in her arms — her expressive features full of animation; altogether she struck me as a fit subject for one of those airy and exquisite sketches with which Sir Thomas Lawrence was then occasionally delighting the world.

"Oh, Doctor ——," she commenced, in the same rich voice I so well remembered, holding out one of her hands to me as I descended the carriage steps — "I am so delighted to see you again; but really," looking at her husband, "Arthur did so frighten me about the child, and I am not a very experienced mother; but I suppose it's the same with all fathers — alarmed at *such* trifles" —

"Really, Emma, this is capital," interrupted the Colonel, half piqued and half pleased, while I could not help laughing at them both, "so it was I — but who was it, Emma, that came rushing into my dressing room this morning, her hair half *en papillote*?"

"Arthur, don't be absurd; there's no need."

"Well, I forgive you! It was all my fault; but, thank God, here's the young hero, seemingly as well as ever he was in his life: many, many happy returns."

"'Tis his birth-day, Doctor," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen, eagerly, with a sweet smile.

The Colonel took the child out of his mother's arms and kissed him heartily. "But what apology can we make, Emma, to Doctor ——?"

"Oh, don't say a syllable. I am sincerely glad that I have come, and more so, that there was not the necessity for it you supposed. My dear Mrs. St. Helen, how glad I am to see you," I continued, as she took my arm, the Colonel proceeding on with the child in his arms, who seemed, however, anxious to get back to his nurse. "I have often thought of you, and wondered where you had hid yourselves. But before we talk of past times, let me hear what it was that so alarmed you about that sweet little child?"

"Oh — why, I suspect it's all my fault, Doctor — I was very foolish; but we do so love him that we are afraid of the least thing. He's so beautiful that I fear we shall lose him; he's too good; we should be *too* happy."

"All mothers, Mrs. St. Helen, say that; but I want to hear whether we are right in dismissing all anxiety about the appearances that so alarmed you this morning."

"I'm quite ashamed of it. It was evidently nothing but a little redness on his forehead, which was occasioned, no doubt, by the pressure of the

pillow, and it quite disappeared before the colonel had been gone half an hour; and the nurse did not tell me till afterwards; and we had no man here at the time to ride after the colonel; and so "pushing about the end of her parasol upon the grass, and looking down, as we slowly followed the colonel towards the house. I laughed heartily at the kind of sheepish air with which she confessed the slight occasion there had been for her alarm. She began again to apologise:

"Pho, pho, my dear Mrs. St. Helen, this has happened to me more than a hundred times; but never when I less regretted it than I do now. I have had a delightful drive, and I have seen you looking so well and happy; you cannot think how rejoiced I am on your account. What a contrast is your present life to that you led at the Earl of Hetheringham's! You must be as happy as the day is long."

"And so indeed I am! I never knew what real happiness was, till I knew Colonel St. Helen! We have never had a difference yet. He worships the very ground" — She paused, hung her head, and her eyes filled with tears.

"He looks quite the soldier," said I, glancing at his tall and erect figure.

"Oh, yes, and he is! He has the noblest disposition in the world! so generous, and as simple as the little creature that he carries. You would hardly think him the same man when he is at home, that at the head of his regiment looks so cold, and stern and formal. And he is brave as" — her beautiful features were turned towards me, flashed with excitement. "Do you know he's been in three engagements, and I have heard from several officers that he is one of the most desperate and fearless" —

"Ah, you recollect those beautiful pines, Mrs. St. Helen," said I:

"The warrior's heart when touched by me. Can as downy, soft and yielding be,

As his own white plume that high amid  
death,  
Through the field has shone, yet moves with  
a breath!"

Her eyes were fixed intently on me while I repeated these lines, filled with tears as I concluded, and she spoke not. "Where are these lines?" she began at length; but ashamed of her yet unsubdued emotion, she quickly turned aside her head, and left the sentence unfinished. Her little dog that came scampering down towards us happily turned her thoughts.

"How very, very ridiculous!" she exclaimed, half laughing, half crying, pointing to a light blue ribbon tied round the dog's neck, in a large knot or bow, the little animal now frisking merrily about her, and then rolling about on the grass, evidently not knowing what to make of his gay collar. "The fact is, Doctor, that this being our little boy's first birthday, my maid has determined that even the dog — Down, Fan! down! you little impudent creature; go and run after your young master;" and away bounded Fan, leaving us once more alone.

"When did you hear of the Hetheringhams last?"

"Oh, by the way," she answered eagerly, "only a day or two ago. And what do you think? Did you read that account of the elopement in the papers with such numbers of stars and initials?"

"Certainly I recollect; but whom do they mean?"

"My fair proud cousin, Anne Sedley, and the youngest officer in Arthur's regiment. Who would have thought it! She was always the most unkind of any of them towards me; but I am not the less sorry for her. Nothing but misery can come of an elopement; and how they are to live I do not know, for neither of them has anything."

"You see very little of the Earl

and Countess, or your cousins, I suppose, now?"

"We have scarcely met since we were married, and we don't regret it. Arthur does not like any of them, for I could not help telling him how they had treated me; and, besides, we see nobody, nor do we wish, for we are not yet tired of each other, and have plenty to do at home of one kind or another. In fact, we have only one thing that distresses us, a fear lest the Colonel may be ordered to join his regiment and go abroad. Oh! we tremble at the thought, at least I am sure that I do; especially if it should happen before November," she added faintly coloring. I understood her delicate intimation that she bade fair to become again a mother and told her so. "What should I do, in my situation, all alone here: my husband gone, perhaps, never to return. I assure you it often makes me very sad indeed; but here he comes."

"Why, Emma! How serious! Positively in tears! What, have you been regretting to Doctor — that you have not got a patient for him?"

"No, dearest Arthur; the fact is we have been talking over past times! I was telling him how happy we were in our solitude here" —

"But, I dare say Doctor —, with myself," said the Colonel, quickly, observing Mrs. St. Helen not yet to have entirely recovered from her emotion, "will not think the worse of Densleigh when we've had a little lunch."

"Well, I'll rejoin you in a few minutes," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen, turning from us.

"Aha," said the Colonel, as he led me into the room where lunch was spread; "she's gone to look after Master St. Helen's dinner, I suppose: we shan't see her this quarter of an hour! He must never eat a mouthful without her seeing it! We won't wait, Doctor —," and we sat down, for I had really not much time to

lose. Densleigh certainly was a delightful residence — happily situated, and laid out with much taste and elegance. The room in which we were sitting at lunch opened upon a soft green, sloping down to the banks of a pleasant stream, and commanded an extensive prospect, of which Mrs. St. Helen had recently completed a very beautiful water-color sketch, which was suspended near where I sat.

"You must come some day, doctor, and see Emma's port-feuille — for she really draws very beautifully. I'll try to get a sight of the picture she has nearly finished of our little Arthur — by Heaven, 'tis perfection!"

Here Mrs. St. Helen made her appearance; Master St. Helen had made a very hearty dinner, and Emma was again in high spirits, and I persuaded her to take a glass of wine with me, but not to give me a sight of the mysteries which the Colonel had spoken of. She would not for the world let me see her half-finished daubs, and so forth; and as for the others she would show them all to me the next time I came, &c. &c. All lady-artists are alike, so I did not press the matter. A pleasant hour I passed at Densleigh — thinking where was happiness to be found, if not there! I was not allowed to leave before I had promised, never to come within a mile or two without calling upon them. They attended me to the door, where were drawn up my carriage and the pony phaeton of Mrs. St. Helen, with two beautiful little greys, which also were bedight with the light blue ribbons. Master St. Helen and his maid were already seated in it, and I saw that Mrs. St. Helen longed to join them. Ah, you *are* a happy woman, thought I, as I drove off; you ought indeed to feel grateful to Heaven for having cast your lot in pleasant places. Long may you live, the pride of your husband — mother, it may be, of a race of heroes!



## CHAPTER III.

### THE DEPARTURE.—CAPTAIN ALVERLEY.

ABOUT six months afterwards, my eye lit upon the following announcement in one of the newspapers:—“On the 2d instant, at Densleigh Grange, the lady of Colonel St. Helen of a son.” I discovered, upon inquiry, that both mother and child were doing well, although the event so dreaded by Mrs. St. Helen had come to pass, and very greatly affected her spirits; the Colonel was ordered, with his regiment, upon foreign service. She had nearly succeeded in persuading him to quit the army; and it required all the influence of his most experienced personal friends, as well as a tolerably distinct intimation of opinion from the Royal Commander-in-Chief at the Horse Guards, to prevent him from yielding to her entreaties. His destination was India; and with a heavy heart, six weeks before her accouchement took place, he bade her adieu, feeling that, too probably, it was for ever! He could not, however, tear himself away; twice did he return suddenly and unexpectedly to Densleigh, after having taken, as he had thought, a final farewell. She insisted on returning with him to London, and witnessing his departure. When it had taken place, she returned to Densleigh, and for awhile gave herself up to the most violent emotions of grief. Dreading the consequences to her, in her critical circumstances, Mr. Ogilvie, the sister of Colonel St. Helen, came down to Densleigh, and succeeded in bringing Mrs. St. Helen up to town with her, hoping that a change of scene and the gaieties of

the metropolis might aid in recruiting her agitated spirits, and thereby prepare her for the trial she had so soon to undergo. She had not been long in London before she prevailed upon Mrs. Ogilvie to drive with her to the Horse-Guards, and endeavor, if possible, to gain some intelligence as to the probable duration of her husband's absence, and of the nature of the service in which he was to be employed. Her heart almost failed her when the carriage drew up at the Horse-Guards. With some trepidation she gave the servant a card bearing her name, on which she had written a few lines stating the inquiry she had called to make, and desired him to take and wait with it for an answer. “His Royal Highness will send to you, Ma'am, in a few moments,” said the servant, on his return. Presently an officer in splendid uniform was seen approaching the carriage; he was an aide-de-camp of the Commander-in-Chief, and Mrs. St. Helen, with some additional agitation, recognized in him, as he stood before her, Captain Alverley. To her indeed it was a most unexpected meeting; and he seemed not free from embarrassment.

“His Royal Highness has directed me to inform you,” said he, bowing politely, “that he regrets being unable to receive you, as he is now engaged with important business. He also directs me to say, in answer to your inquiry, that Colonel St. Helen's stay will probably not exceed three years.” While he was yet speaking Mrs. St. Helen, overcome with agita-

tion, hastily bowed to him, ordered the coachman to drive on, and sunk back on her seat exhausted.

"Emma! Emma! what can you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Ogilvie with much displeasure; "I never saw such rudeness! Yes," looking back towards the Horse-Guards, "he may well be astonished! I declare he is still standing thunder-struck at your most extraordinary behavior!"

"I — I cannot help it," murmured Mrs. St. Helen faintly, "I thought I should have fainted. He so reminded me of Arthur; and, did you observe," she continued, sobbing, "nothing was said about the nature of the service! Oh, I am sure I shall never see him again! I wish, I wish, I had not called at the odious place — I might have then hoped!" A long drive, however, through a cheerful part of the suburbs, at length somewhat relieved her oppression; but it was evident, from her silence and her absent manner, that her thoughts continued occupied with what she had seen and heard at the Horse Guards.

Captain Alverley did stand thunder-struck, and continued so standing for some moments after the carriage had driven out of sight. Had I then seen him, and known that of his character which I now know, I should have been reminded of the poet's description of the deadly serpent —

"Terribly beautiful the serpent lay,  
Wreathed like a coronet of gold and jewels  
Fit for a tyrant's brow; anon he flew,  
Straight like an arrow shot from his own  
wings!"

— or rather it might have appeared as though the rattle-snake were stunned for an instant by the suddenness of the appearance of his beautiful victim. No; the fatal spring had not yet been made, nor had as yet the fascination of that death-dooming eye been felt by the victim!

—  
Almost immediately upon Colonel

St. Helen's arrival in India, he was hurried into action; and in little more than a year after his departure from England, the Gazette made most honorable mention of his name, as connected with a very important action in the Mahratta war. I could easily contrive, I thought, to call to-day upon Mrs. St. Helen, and so be, perhaps, the first to show her the Gazette, and I made my arrangements accordingly. Putting the important document in my pocket, I drove in the direction of Densleigh, having a patient in the neighborhood. I left my carriage in the road, and walked up the avenue to the house. I trod so noiselessly upon the "soft smooth-shaven green," that my approach was not perceived by the occupants of the room in which we had lunched on the occasion already noticed. They were Mrs. St. Helen and her little son Arthur. The latter was evidently acting the soldier, having a feather stuck in his cap, and a broad red ribbon round his waist, to which was attached a sword; and, in order to complete his resemblance to the figure of an officer, he had a drum fastened in front of him, to the harmonious sound of which he was marching fiercely round the room; while his mother, her beautiful countenance turned fully and fondly towards him, was playing upon the piano, "See the conquering hero comes!" She perceived me approach, and started for a moment; but hastily motioning me not to appear and disturb what was going on, I stepped aside.

"And what does brave papa do, Arthur?" said she, ceasing to play. He stopped, dropped his drum-sticks, drew his little sword with some difficulty from its sheath, and after appearing to aim one or two blows at some imaginary enemy, returned it to its scabbard, and was marching with a very dignified air past his mother, when she rose from her seat,

and suddenly clasping the young warrior in her arms, smothered him with kisses.

"Pray walk in, dear Doctor," said she, approaching me, after setting down the child, "forgive a poor lonely mother's weakness."

"So then you have heard of it?"

"Heard of what?" she inquired, hurriedly, slightly changing color. I took out the Gazette. "Oh, come in, come in, and we'll sit down—I—I begin to feel—rather faint;" her eyes fastened upon the paper I held in my hands. We sat down together upon the sofa. As soon as, with the aid of a vinaigrette, she had recovered a little from her agitation, I read to her, who listened breathless, the very flattering manner in which Colonel St. Helen's conduct, in a most sanguinary action, was mentioned in the despatch, with the gratifying addition that his name was not included in the list of either killed or wounded. "Oh, my noble, gallant Arthur," she murmured, bursting into tears, "I knew he would acquit himself well. I wonder, Arthur, if he thought of us, when he was in the field!" snatching up her son, who, with his little hands resting on her lap, stood beside her, looking up concernedly in her face, and folding him to her bosom. A flood of tears relieved her excitement. She kissed the Gazette, and thanked me warmly for having brought it to her. She presently rung the bell, and desired the butler to be sent for, who soon made his appearance.

"Are they at dinner?" she inquired. He bowed. "Then give them two bottles of wine, and let them drink their master's health; for"—

She could not finish the sentence, and I added for her: "Colonel St. Helen has been engaged in a glorious action, and gained great distinction."

"I'll give it, ma'am—sir—I will," interrupted the impatient butler;—"we'll be sure to drink my master's

health, ma'am, his best health, and yours, ma'am, and the young gentleman; Lord, sir, it couldn't be otherwise! Is master hurt, sir?"

"Not a hair, I believe," I answered.

"Lord Almighty!" he exclaimed, unconsciously snapping his fingers as his hands hung down, "only to think of it, ma'am, how glad you must be, ma'am, and young master there, ma'am; but how could it be otherwise, ma'am?"

"Thank you, Bennet, thank you! make yourselves happy, for I am sure I am," replied Mrs. St. Helen, as well as her agitation would allow her, and the butler withdrew. Poor Mrs. St. Helen asked me a hundred questions, which I had no more means of answering than herself; and, in short, was evidently greatly excited. As I stood at the open window, which opened on the lawn, admiring for a moment the prospect it commanded, my eye caught the figure of a cavalry officer in undress uniform, followed by his groom, cantering easily towards Densleigh.

"Who can this be, Mrs. St. Helen?" said I, pointing him out to her, as she rose from the sofa.

"Who, Doctor? where?" she inquired hastily.

"It is an officer in undress uniform, evidently coming hither; I suppose he brings you official information." At that moment the approaching figures were again, for an instant visible at a sudden turn of the road; and Mrs. St. Helen, slightly changing color, exclaimed, with, as I thought, a certain tremor easily accounted for, "Oh, yes, I know who it is: Captain Alverley, aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief; no doubt he comes to tell me what I know already through your kindness; and—he may also bring me letters."

"Very possibly. Well, dear Mrs. St. Helen, I most cordially congratulate



late you on this good news ; but pray don't suffer yourself to be excited," said I, taking my hat and stick.

"Don't, don't hurry away, Doctor," she replied. I took her hand in mine. It was cold and trembled. I hastily repeated my advice, having already staid longer than my engagements allowed. As I reached my carriage, Captain Alverley — if such was the officer's name — was just entering the gate, which his groom was holding open for him.

"Well," thought I, as I drove off, "if I were Colonel St. Helen, and six or seven thousand miles off, I should not exactly prefer a tete-a-tete, even on the subject of my own magnificent exploits, between my beautiful wife and that handsome officer," for certainly, as far as my hurried scrutiny went, I never had seen a man with a finer person and air, or a more prepossessing countenance. That was the first time I had ever seen or heard of Captain Alverley.

Some little time after this occurrence, the death of an elder brother entitled Colonel St. Helen to an income of several thousands a-year and a house in the immediate neighborhood of Berkely Square. This was an event the Colonel had anticipated before leaving England, as his brother had long been in a declining state of health ; and he had arranged with his solicitor and man of business, that should the event take place before the expiration of the term for which he held Densleigh, efforts were to be made to continue the lease, and the house in — Street was to be let, but not for longer than three years. If, however, Densleigh could not be secured for a further lease, then Mrs. St. Helen was to occupy — Street till the Colonel's return to England. Colonel St. Helen's brother died shortly before the lease of Densleigh expired, and its proprietor, wishing to

live in it himself, declined to renew the lease. The necessary arrangements were therefore made for removing Mrs. St. Helen, with her establishment to — Street, a noble residence, which the Colonel had left orders should, in the contingency which had happened, be furnished entirely according to Mrs. St. Helen's wishes. He had also made the proper arrangements for putting her in possession of an additional allowance of £2000 a-year ; and under the judicious superintendence of his solicitor, all these arrangements were speedily and satisfactorily carried into effect ; and Mrs. St. Helen was duly installed the mistress of her new and elegant residence, with a handsome equipage, a full retinue of servants, and a clear income of £3,500 a-year, including her former allowance. Oh, unhappy, infatuated husband, to have made such an arrangement ! Would that you had never permitted your lonely wife to enter such scenes of dazzling danger — that you had rather placed her in secret retirement till your return — far from the "garish eyes of the world — even in some lone sequestered spot "

"Where glide the sunbeams through the  
lattice boughs,  
And fell like dew-drops on the spangled  
ground,  
To light the diamond-beetle on his way ;  
Where cheerful openings let the sky look  
down  
Into the very heart of solitude,  
On little garden-plots of social flowers,  
That crowded from the shades to peep at  
daylight ;  
Or where impermeable foliage made  
Midnight at noon, and chill damp horror  
reign'd  
O'er dead fallen leaves and shining fungu-  
ses ;"

— *any where* but in London. It was done, however, at the impulse of a generous confiding nature — though in fatal error — for the best !

## CHAPTER IV.

A LONDON SEASON—DANGER.

I WAS driving home down — street one evening alone, on my return from a dinner party, when I was stopped for a moment by a crowd of carriages opposite Lady ——'s; and recollected that I had promised to look in, if possible. I therefore got out, and made my way as soon as I could into the crowded mansion. Can any thing be absurder than such a scene? I always disliked balls and routs; but such as these must be perfectly intolerable, I fancy, to any sober, rational person. It was full five minutes before I could force my way up stairs and along the spacious landing, to the door of the principal room, into which "all the" unhappy "world" had squeezed itself, and was undergoing purgatory. How many hundreds of ladies' maids and valets would have gone distracted to see their mistresses and masters so unable to display their handiwork: standing jammed together! but this is enjoyment and fashion: why should I find fault with those who experience pleasure in such scenes? After gazing on the glistening, confused scene for a moment, admiring the fortitude of those who were enduring the heat and pressure without a murmur, perceiving no one I knew, at least with-in speaking distance, I passed on towards another room, in search of Lady ——, whom I wished to show that I had kept my promise. The second room was much less crowded, and real, not make-believe, dancing was going forward.

"She's very beautiful, is she not?"

said a gentleman just before me, to one of two ladies who leaned upon his arm, and who seemed looking critically at the dancers, — "Y-e-s, rather," was the answer, in a languid, drawing tone.

"Waltzes well enough," said the other lady, "but for my part I quite dislike to see it."

"Dislike to see it? You joke," interrupted the gentleman; "why do you dislike it? Upon my honor, I think it's quite a treat to see such waltzing as theirs."

"Oh, I dare say it's all correct enough, if one comes to that. I must own I should not waltz myself, if I were married," said the glistening skeleton on his right arm, dropping its elaborately dressed head with a would-be *naïve* air. The ladies were two of the daughters of the Earl of Hetheringham: I knew not who the gentleman was.

"Really, I must say it's too bad, under circumstances," said one of the ladies, disdainfully eyeing a couple who were floating gracefully round the room, and who presently stopped in front of where I was standing, the lady apparently exhausted for the moment with her exertion. The reader may guess my feelings on recognizing in these waltzers, Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen! Fearful of encountering her eye, I slipped away from where I had been standing, but not before I heard one of the fair critics, immediately before whom the pair of waltzers were standing, address her with a sweet air, and com-

pliment her on her performance! At a little distance I continued to observe her movements. She was dressed magnificently, and became her dress magnificently. She was certainly the most beautiful woman in the room; and with her companion, who was in full regimentals, one of the most conspicuous couples present. After a few minutes' pause, spent in conversing with her two affectionate cousins, she suffered her partner gently to lead her off again among the waltzers. I could not help following her motions with mingled feelings of pity and indignation. I resolved to throw myself in her way before quitting the room, and for that purpose stepped in front of the circle of bystanders. I knew a little of Captain Alverley's character, at least, by his reputation; and recollected the agitation his approach had occasioned her, on my pointing out his figure to her at Densleigh. There were four or five couples waltzing; and those whom I was so eagerly observing, a second time stopped immediately in front of where I now stood: he apologizing for the force with which he had come against me. She, too, observed it, and turned her head to see to whom her partner had apologized. The instant she recognised me, her features became suffused with crimson. Her companion observed it, and looked at me with a surprised and haughty air, as if designing to discourage me from speaking to her. I was not, however, to be deterred by such a trifle.

"How are you, Doctor?" said, or rather stammered Mrs. St. Helen, giving me her hand, which I thought trembled a little.

"When did you hear from the Colonel last?" I inquired presently, disregarding the insulting air of impatience manifested by Captain Alverley, who could not avoid observing the slight agitation and surprise my

presence had occasioned his beautiful partner.

"Oh — I heard from India — not for several months; oh, yes, I did, about six weeks ago. He was very well when he wrote." Partly with the fatigue of waltzing, and partly through mental discomposure, she was evidently agitated. She would have continued her conversation with me, but Captain Alverley insisted on taking her in quest of a seat and of refreshment. I soon after quitted the house, without any further attempt to see Lady —; and my thoughts were so much occupied with the casual rencontre I have just described, that I walked several paces down the street, on my way home, before I recollected that my carriage was waiting for me. I had seen nothing whatever that was directly improper, and yet I felt, or grieved as though I had. Good God! was this the way in which Mrs. St. Helen testified her love for her generous, confiding husband; for him who had so affectionately secured her, by anticipation, the means of enjoying his expected accession of fortune: for him who was at that moment, possibly, gallantly charging in action with the enemies of his country; or who might have already received the wound which rendered her a widow and her children fatherless? What accursed influence had deadened her keen sensibilities — had impaired her delicate perception of propriety? I began to feel heavy misgivings about this Captain Alverley; in short I reached home full of vexing thoughts, for Mrs. St. Helen had suddenly sunk many, many degrees in my estimation. She did not appear to me to be the same woman that I had seen some twelve months before at Densleigh: the tender mother, the enthusiastic wife — *what* had come to her?

I thought it not improbable that I should, in the morning, receive a message from her requesting a visit dur-



ing the day; and I was not mistaken, for while sitting at breakfast, her servant brought me a note to that effect, requesting me to call, if convenient, before one o'clock. I foresaw that our interview would be of a different description to any former one. However uneasy I felt on her account, I did not desire to be placed in the disagreeable position of receiving explanations and excuses which nothing had called forth but her own consciousness of impropriety, and my involuntary air of astonishment on the preceding evening. I had so many engagements that day, that it was nearly two o'clock before I could reach Mrs. St. Helen's. She sat in the drawing-room, with her sister-in-law, Mrs. Ogilvie, who had called about an hour before: a very elegant sweet woman, some ten or twelve years her senior. I had evidently interrupted an unpleasant interview between them; for the former was in tears, and the latter looked agitated; while, consequently, all of us looked rather embarrassed.

"Doctor ——," said Mrs. St. Helen, quickly, after a few ordinary inquiries, "now, do pray tell me, did you see any thing objectionable in my" ——

"Emma! how can you be so foolish?" interrupted Mrs. Ogilvie, rising, with much displeasure. "I am really extremely vexed with you!" and she quitted the room without regarding Mrs. St. Helen's intreaties that she would stay. I should have liked to follow her, or that she had remained during my brief visit. I proceeded immediately, with a matter of fact air, to make a few professional inquiries.

"But, my dear Doctor ——," said she, earnestly, without answering my questions, "do tell me candidly, what did you see so very particular — and amiss, in my conduct, last night?"

"What did I see amiss? Dear

Mrs. St. Helen, you amaze me! I had not been at Lady ——'s above a minute or two before we met, and I left almost directly after" ——

"Then what did your look mean? Do, dear Doctor, tell me what that look meant? I really could not help observing it, and I can't forget it."

"Mrs. St. Helen! you really quite — you must have strangely mistaken my looks."

"Perhaps you don't — I suppose — that is, I know what you meant; was it that you didn't admire married women waltzing? Now, do tell me, for I feel quite unhappy."

"Well, since you are so *very* anxious to know my opinion, I have no hesitation in saying a" ——

"Oh, pray go on, Doctor," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen impatiently.

"Why, all I was going to say is, that I do not feel *particularly* pleased — but I may be quite absurd, at seeing married women waltzing, especially *mothers*."

"Dear Doctor, and why not? You can't think how much I respect your opinion; but surely, good heavens! what can there be indelicate" ——

"Mrs. St. Helen! I did not use the word."

"Well, but I know you meant it; why won't you be candid, now, Doctor? But had you no other reason?" Her eyes filled with tears.

"My dear Mrs. St. Helen! what reason could I possibly have?" I interrupted gravely, wishing to put an end to what threatened to become a very unpleasant discussion. "I have given you an answer to the strange question you asked; and now suppose" ——

"Oh, Doctor, it is useless to attempt putting me off in this way — I can read a look as well as any one. I must have been blind not to see yours. The fact is, I suppose" —— she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which were again beginning to

glisten with tears, "if you would but be honest—did you not think I was wrong in waltzing when my husband—is abroad and—and in danger?" She sobbed.

"Really, Mrs. St. Helen, you will persist in making my position here so unpleasant, that I must indeed take my leave." At that moment I heard the sound of a horse's feet approaching in the street. Mrs. St. Helen heard it, too; and hurrying to the bell, pulled it with undisguised trepidation. As soon as the servant entered, she said in a vehement tone, "Not at home! Not at home!" In spite of her efforts to conceal it, she trembled violently, and her face became paler than before. Determined to ascertain whether or not my sudden suspicions were correct, I rose, intending to walk to the window, when I expected to see Captain Alverley; but she prevented me, doubtless purposely, extending her arm towards me and begging me to feel her pulse. So I was kept engaged till I heard the hall door closed, after an evident parley, and the retreating of the equestrian visitor. I had been requested to call before one o'clock: it was now past two: had she engaged to ride out with Captain Alverley?

"Well, what do you think of my pulse, Doctor?" inquired Mrs. St. Helen, breathing more freely, but still by no means calm.

"Why, it shows a high state of nervous irritability and excitement, Mrs. St. Helen."

"Very probably; and no wonder! People are so cruel and so scandalous." She burst into tears. "Here's my sister been lecturing me this hour, half killing me! She insists"——

"Pray restrain your feelings, Mrs. St. Helen! Why all this agitation! I am not your father confessor," said I, endeavoring to assume a gay air. Mrs. St. Helen paused, and sobbed heavily.

"She tells me that my behavior is so—so light, that I am getting myself talked about." She seemed exceedingly distressed. "Now, dear Doctor, if you really love me as a very, very old friend—I'm sure I love you—do tell me candidly, have you ever heard any thing?"

"Never, Mrs. St. Helen, I solemnly assure you, have I heard your name mentioned to my knowledge, till last night, when I overheard two ladies, who seemed to be wondering at your waltzing"——

"Oh," she interrupted me with great vivacity, "I know who they were! My cousins! My sweet, good-natured cousins—Oh, the vipers! Wherever I go they hiss at me. But I'll endure it no longer! I'll drive to——Square this very day, and insist"——

"If you *do*, Mrs. St. Helen, and mention one syllable of what I have perhaps unguardedly told you, and what I could not help overhearing, we never meet again."

"Then what *am* I to do?" she exclaimed passionately. "Am I to endure all this? Must I suffer myself to be slandered with impunity?"

"God forbid, Mrs. St. Helen, that you should be slandered."

"Then what *am* I to do?"

"Give no occasion," I answered, more dryly, perhaps, than I had intended.

"Give no occasion, indeed!" echoed Mrs. St. Helen, with an indignant air, rising at the same time, and walking rapidly to and fro. "And who says that I ever have given occasion?" fixing her bright eye upon me with a kind of defiance.

"Mrs. St. Helen, you greatly grieve and surprise me by all this. You ask me again and again for an answer to a very strange question, and when at length you get one, you are affronted with me for giving it. I declare that I know nothing whatever about your

conduct one way or the other. But since you have forced me to speak, very reluctantly — for I have no business to enter into such matters — I can but repeat what I have said, that if the tongue of scandal and envy is busy with you, you must be extraordinarily on your guard to let your conduct give them the lie!”

“My, dear Doctor,” said she, suddenly resuming her seat, and speaking in the sweetest and most sorrowful tone of voice, “I — I *will* be more guarded; I — I will not waltz again.” Sobs prevented her going on. I took her hand cordially.

“I am delighted to hear you say so, Mrs. St. Helen. I know well your high honor, your purity of principle; but, believe me, your innocent, unsuspecting frankness may yet expose you often to danger. Why may I not tell you the feelings of my heart, dear Mrs. St. Helen? they are towards you more those of a father, than a friend or physician. You are young, why should I not tell you what you know? you are very beautiful;” she buried her face in her hands and sobbed almost convulsively. “The men of the world, of fashion, into whose way you have been lately so much thrown, are often very unprincipled and base; they may, with subtle wickedness, contrive snares for you that your innocent inexperience cannot detect till perhaps too late.” She involuntarily squeezed my hand, for I still held hers, but attempted no reply. “Now, may I tell you what was really passing through my mind last night at Lady ——’s?” She spoke not, but continued her face in her handkerchief. “I was thinking that perhaps at the moment you were being whirled round the room by that Captain Alverley, your gallant husband, charging at the head of his regiment, might be tumbling dead from his horse.”

“Ah! and so did I the moment I saw you!” almost shrieked Mrs. St.

Helen, suddenly raising her pallid face from the handkerchief in which it had been buried. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing her going off into violent hysterics. After a long struggle with her tumultuous feelings, “O, Arthur! Arthur!” she exclaimed in such a tone as brought the tears suddenly into my eyes; “if I have ever wronged you in thought, in word, or in deed!”

“Impossible! perfectly impossible!” I exclaimed with energy in a cheerful, exulting tone.

“No!” she exclaimed, sitting suddenly upright, while a noble expression beamed in her excited features, which were blanched with her vehement emotions. “No! I am his wife! I am the mother of his children! I have not betrayed them. I will not!”

I looked at her with astonishment; the wild smile passed quickly from her pallid, beautiful countenance, and she sunk back on the sofa in a swoon. I instantly summoned assistance, and her maid, with one or two other female servants, presently entered hastily with water and smelling-salts.”

“I knew she was ill, sir,” said her maid Joyce: “she’s not been quite herself I may say this several weeks. This constant going out at nights doesn’t do for her, and I’ve often told her so, sir!”

“I suppose she goes out a great deal in the evenings?”

“Oh, yes, sir; three or four times a-week, and oftener, sir.”

“Is it generally late before she comes back?”

“Never hardly before three or four o’clock in the morning, sir; and so tired and knocked up, as one may say.” Here Mrs. St. Helen began to revive. She seemed very much annoyed when she had thoroughly recovered her consciousness, at being surrounded by the servants. After giving a few directions, I left, promising to call again in a day or two.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE DESTROYER.

THREE or four times a-week and oftener! The words rung in my ears long after Mrs. St. Helen was out of sight. Was this the same woman that had once inquired with such a passionate air whether Colonel St. Helen ever thought of her and her children when he was going to the field, and surrounded by death? How would that gallant heart of his have been wrung, at such a moment, had he known in what manner she conducted herself during his absence! Despite what had recently passed between us, I trembled for Mrs. St. Helen; I knew not how far she might be already committed, to what extent her light and thoughtless behavior might have given encouragement to those ever ready to take advantage of such conduct: her emotions had been violent, and were no doubt genuine; and yet the agonies I had been witnessing might be little else than the mere spasms of declining virtue!

Of Captain Alverley, the *Honorable* Charles Alverley, I regret that I should have to speak at any length. But I must: he is one of the main figures in this painful picture; he is the DESTROYER. He belonged to a high family, was a well-educated and accomplished man, of handsome person and an irresistible address; yet, nevertheless, as heartless a villain as ever existed. He was a systematic seducer. The fair sex he professed to idolize; yet he could not look upon them but with a lustful and corrupting eye. He was proverbial for his gallantries; he made every-

thing subservient to them. His character was well known, and yet, alas! he was everywhere esteemed in society, in whose parlance he was a gentleman! Who could resist the gay, the bland, the graceful Alverley, with his coronet in expectation?

Why, asks one in happy ignorance of the world about him, is such a wretch created, and suffered to infest the fairest regions of humanity? It might as well be asked, why has the Almighty created the cobra or the crocodile!

Captain Alverley, as already intimated, had excited a strong interest in Miss Annesley's heart before she had ever seen or heard of Colonel St. Helen. Having discovered her want of fortune, he withdrew on the plea already mentioned, from the competition for her hand, but he never lost sight of her. He had, in fact, determined, come what would, on effecting the ruin of Mrs. St. Helen; and he set to work patiently, and, as he often considered, *scientifically*. It has been supposed, though with what truth I know not, that he had something or other to do with poor Colonel St. Helen's summons upon foreign service; and the moment he had sailed, the fiend commenced his operations. They were long retarded, however, by the strictly secluded life Mrs. St. Helen led at Densleigh, occupied with her holy and happy maternal duties. Would to Heaven that she had never quitted the one, or been diverted, even for a moment, from the performance of the other! The accidental

recontre at the Horse Guards I have already mentioned. The instant that he was commissioned by his Royal master to bear a kind message to Mrs. St. Helen, he determined upon the demeanor he should assume: one at once delicate and deferential, and fraught with sympathy for her evident suffering. Observing her agitation, he did not attempt, by a look or a word, to remind her that they had ever met before; confining himself, with perfect tact, to the delivery of the message with which he had been charged. When Mrs. St. Helen abruptly drove off, in the manner already described, his vile heart leaped for joy. His practised eye saw that her agitation was not *entirely* attributable to the errand on which she had come. He certainly had remained standing in the manner Mrs. Ogilvie had described; but it was not in astonishment, he was pondering what had just happened; and in a few moments returned to the room he had quitted, with a flush on his countenance, and the consciousness that he had commenced his infernal campaign. Some six or eight months afterwards, a packet arrived at the Horse Guards from India, enclosing a letter which the writer, Colonel St. Helen, begged might be thrown into the post for Mrs. St. Helen. Of this, however, Captain Alverley took charge, and that very afternoon rode down to Densleigh, and delivered it with his own hands into those of the servant, "with Captain Alverley's compliments," when he rode off. He justly considered that his delicacy in doing so could not but be appreciated. It was so! Had Mrs. St. Helen then closely and faithfully examined her heart, in order to ascertain the exact nature of her feelings on finding that Captain Alverley had himself brought her a letter with the immediate receipt of which he supposed she could be so much gratified, and that he had

abstained from personally delivering it; had she done this, her heart-stricken eye might have detected the serpent, dim-glistening in dreadful beauty, beneath the concealing foliage. The sudden shudder would have been her salvation; but she did not, she could not. Not hers was the salutary habit or the power of self-examination; not hers, alas! had been the blessed vigilance of a fond and virtuous mother, exercised over her young years! Already, in the sight of God, had commenced the guilt of Mrs. St. Helen, who yet nevertheless was unconscious of the presence or approach of evil, even in thought. But why? Because of her fatal remissness in guarding the "approaches of her heart." Had she then asked help from heaven, she might have perceived the danger which nothing but heaven's help could have detected. The tempter, says an old divine, "is then eyer nighest when we think him farthest off." Yes, a subtle poison had already been imperceptibly infused, in infinitely small quantity, it may be, into the heart of Mrs. St. Helen, a poison of slow but inevitable operation. O, woman, this is the point of danger! I repeat it that, harsh and unjust as it may appear, from the moment alluded to Mrs. St. Helen became an accomplice in effecting her own ruin. Not that she had *as yet* sensibly or consciously suffered any injury; the wife and the mother were still supreme in Mrs. St. Helen; her quick and ardent feelings knew of no other objects, no other outlets than these. O unhappy woman! why was it that when Captain Alverley conveyed to you the intelligence of your husband's triumphs, you trembled at hearing of it? Why was that faint flutter at your heart? Had not I already communicated all he came to tell? What feelings flitted through your bosom when, leaning against the window, you followed the retiring

figure of Alverley? He had been most eloquent in praise of your husband; his winning tones entered your heart; but how failed your eye to encounter the ardent look with which he regarded you? Ought not the conscious difference between the feelings with which you regarded him and me, or any other indifferent person, to have sounded the alarm, in your husband's name, in every chamber of your heart? Ill-fated woman! dare you appeal to Heaven to testify *all* the feelings with which you heard of quitting Densleigh for London? Were you even reluctant to take that step because of your dislike to encounter Alverley? would you avow the feelings with which you found yourself becoming intimate with his distinguished family? Alas! did you not feel a secret satisfaction at finding yourself sitting at Lord ——'s dinner table, with Captain Alverley beside you? Had not your perception of right and wrong been suddenly confused and disturbed, how could you tolerate his altered demeanor towards you? Did you not observe and tremblingly appreciate the tact with which attentions, exquisitely flattering and gratifying to you, were concealed from all others? Did a sense of security from observation begin to show itself when you perceived the skill with which all his movements were conducted? What alteration of feeling did not all this imply? Dreadful questions: how clearly does your disinclination to answer them indicate the nature of the change you are undergoing!

Mrs. St. Helen had not been in London half a year, before Captain Alverley felt that he was triumphing, that his long-continued and deeply-laid schemes were conducting him to success. The first, the very first step, he had felt to be every thing: it had gained him an interest, however faint, in her feelings, and he cherished it with the most exquisite skill, the most

watchful assiduity. He kept *himself* even in the back ground. He would excite her feelings with his generous and eloquent eulogies of Colonel St. Helen's conduct abroad; in the middle of one of them he suddenly became confused, heaved a faint sigh, and resumed his conversation with ill-disguised embarrassment. He busied himself, he took infinite pains, at least he led her to think so, in procuring the return home of Colonel St. Helen; thus, in short, and in a thousand other ways, he at length disarmed Mrs. St. Helen, by lulling her suspicion, or rather preventing their being excited. Consummately skilled in the workings of the female heart, he guided his conduct according to the indications he discovered. In handing her one night to her carriage from the opera, he made a point of insulting a gentleman who, with a lady on his arm, was hurrying on before Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen. A hurried whisper between the two gentlemen satisfied Mrs. St. Helen that there was mischief in preparation. "For heaven's sake!" she whispered, in excessive trepidation; but he gently forced her into the carriage, and permitted it to drive off without his uttering a word. He gained his end. The evening papers of the ensuing day duly announced an "affair of honor" between the "Marquis of \* \* \* \* \*," attended by, &c., and Captain A. B. C., attended, &c. "The meeting arose out of an alleged affront offered by the noble Marquis to a young and beautiful lady," &c. &c., "whom the Captain was conducting to her carriage," &c. &c. Very strange to say, neither party did the other any harm. Captain Alverley, on the next opera night, found his way to her box.

"Captain Alverley! how could you?" commenced Mrs. St. Helen, very earnestly.

"My dear Mrs. St. Helen!" was



the only reply, with a look that none could give but Captain Alverley. He knew the amount of his gain, and was in ecstasies.

In the progress of "the affair," Captain Alverley's next step was to accustom Mrs. St. Helen to hear herself called a flirt, and to have his name, on such occasions, always judiciously coupled with hers. The first time that ever she waltzed with him, which he justly regarded as an open triumph, was in consequence of a very heated altercation she had with Mrs. Ogilvie, who had freely charged her with culpable lightness of conduct with reference to Captain Alverley; the consequence of which was, that Mrs. St. Helen went, as she had angrily threatened, to a ball, and casting a look of defiance at her sister-in-law, she instantly accepted Captain Alverley's invitation, infinitely to his astonishment. He saw his position, and behaved with prudence. After one or two rounds, he led her, with an air of the properest deference in the world, to a seat, and paid her no marked attentions whatever during the evening. He perceived that her lynx-eyed sister watched his every movement; and for upwards of a fortnight he suspended all but the most ordinary and casual civilities and attentions to Mrs. St. Helen. Why did not the infatuated woman at once break through all the meshes with which she was now conscious of being surrounded? Why did no sudden alarm of virtue, no heaven-inspired strength, enable her to "flee like a bird from the snare of the fowler?" Alas, that I should have to write it! *She did not now wish to do so.* Not that yet even she contemplated the the horrible idea of positive guilt — vastly far from it. She was so conscious of her own strength as to prevent all apprehensions on that score. It is true she was occasionally sensible, with a heart-flutter and cheek

suffused, of an interest in Captain Alverley, that was inconsistent with the undivided affection due to her husband; she went not further consciously, but how far was this! She consoled herself with the notion that it was certainly rather coquettish, and that was almost universal. The plain truth was, she began to indulge towards Captain Alverley feelings which she no longer dared to scrutinize. Her vanity, again, would not suffer her to part with so gay and dazzling a follower: "she was surely able to take care of herself."

Once or twice I called upon Mrs. St. Helen, in pursuance of the promise I made, but without seeing her, as she had just gone out. This might, or it might not be true. If she was denying herself to me, it must have been on account of what had taken place on the occasion alluded to; and was it that she was ashamed of her frankness, of the extent of her admissions, or that she regretted having made them from other considerations? I was driving one afternoon through the Park, on my way to a patient near Cumberland Gate, when I happened to overtake the open carriage of Mrs. St. Helen, driving very slowly, she being in conversation with an equestrian who walked his horse alongside, and I soon detected in him Captain Alverley. I perceived with a hurried look in passing, that she was listening intently to what he was saying, looking down, and slightly coloring. I felt sick at heart for her! The next time that I saw her at home, she seemed very calm, and sensibly colder in her manner towards me than I had ever seen her before. She made not, nor of course did I, the slightest allusion to our late deeply interesting conversation. In answer to my inquiries, she said that she was in very good health, except that she did not now sleep so soundly as heretofore, and her appetite had also declined —

the usual consequences, I told her, of a life of London dissipation, of irregular hours, excitement and fatigue.

"As I feel rather solitary in this large house," said she, "I have invited a Miss Churchill, a distant relation of the Colonel's, to pay me a visit. She's a very good, sweet girl, and I have no doubt we shall be inseparable." While she said this, a slight color mounted into her cheek, which set me speculating upon what she had just told me. Was then her summons to Miss Churchill a *signal of distress*? Was it that she began to feel her danger? that she wished a protector, some one who should be indeed, as she said, inseparable from her, ever by her side, whose presence might check, if not prevent, the increasing ardor and attentions of Captain Alverley? Faint effort of endangered virtue! But it *was* an effort, and I rejoiced to see it made.

"When do you purpose leaving town?" I inquired.

"Leaving town!" she exclaimed quickly, "why, dear Doctor, *should* I leave town? the season not yet at its height, even? Besides, I hate the country; I never heartily liked it."

"I thought, Mrs. St. Helen" —

"Oh, yes," she interrupted hastily, "I know what you mean. Densleigh was certainly a pleasant place enough, but we've lost it." She paused for a moment, and added, "but I suppose that about August we must go down somewhere or other" —

"The sea-air will do wonders for you and the children."

"Yes, I dare say it would," she replied, with rather an indifferent air, "but at present they are very well; I always have them taken to the Park; and where can there be a finer air?" Here some visitors were announced, the servant at the same time laying down six or seven notes and cards of invitation upon one of the tables.

About a month afterwards I receiv-

ed the following note from Mrs. St. Helen :

"Dear Doctor, — Will you call in here, in the course of the morning, to see one of the children, who, I fear, is poorly? Jones tells me she thinks it is the measles. I hope it is not anything worse, the scarlet fever, for instance, or small pox? But you can soon tell. I shall wait at home for you till two.

Ever yours,

E. ST. HELEN.

P. S. I have never had either of these horrid complaints myself, and feel rather nervous.

— Street, 10 o'clock."

What a dismal contrast this note afforded, I thought, laying it down with a sigh, to the eager, alarmed summons she had sent on a former occasion from Densleigh! A little after two o'clock I was at — Street, and was shown up immediately into the nursery. Mrs. St. Helen's pony-phæton was at the door, and she was sitting, ready dressed for a drive, on the corner of the bed in which lay her younger child. Her handkerchief saturated with eau de cologne, was every now and then lifted to her face, as though she dreaded infection. She looked very beautiful, her dress infinitely became her, and not particularly agitated.

"I was beginning to get fidgetty, Doctor: I was afraid I should not see you," said she, rising to meet me. I assured her that I had been unexpectedly detained. "And what do you think of the little love? I was afraid he was ailing a little yesterday — his eyes looked very heavy yesterday evening, didn't they, Jones?" turning to the maid.

"Yes, ma'am," she replied, eagerly, directing an affectionate and anxious look to the child. "You may recollect, ma'am, I asked you yesterday afternoon if we hadn't better send for" —

"Oh, yes — I dare say — I think you did, Jones," interrupted Mrs. St. Helen quickly, and with rather a displeased air. "Jones is always terrified with every change in the child's face. But do you think there is any thing really the matter, Doctor?"

After a little examination I told her that I thought the child was sickening for the measles.

"Is he indeed, sweet little lamb?" she exclaimed, looking really kindly at the child. "You don't think it's scarlet fever, now?" after a moment's pause, turning anxiously towards me, and gently agitating her fragrant handkerchief.

"No," I replied, "at present I think it is decidedly the measles."

"Measles are not dangerous, are they?"

"La, ma'am!" interrupted Jones, who was kneeling at the side of the bed, near the child, her eyes filling with tears, "excuse me, ma'am, but my poor sister's child died of them only a twelvemonth ago?"

"Oh, nonsense, Jones, why do you try to alarm me in this way? There's no such very great danger, Doctor, is there?" turning towards me with more interest in her manner than she had hitherto manifested.

"I sincerely hope not. At present I can assure you there is every appearance of its being a mild attack."

"Only feel how hot his little hand is, ma'am?" said Jones.

Mrs. St. Helen did not remove her gloves, but said to me, "Of course he is rather feverish just now?"

After giving a few directions concerning the temperature of the room, his food, and one or two other little matters, I left, and descended to the drawing room to write a prescription.

"I shall return home by four, Jones," said Mrs. St. Helen, also quitting the room, and following me, "be sure you pay him every attention — don't remove your eyes from him for a moment!"

"I'm quite delighted to find that there's no danger, Doctor," said she, seating herself beside me, as I began to write.

"Indeed, my dear madam," determined not to let matters pass so very easily, "we must not be too sanguine. There are two forms of measles, the one a mild, the other very malignant. At present I cannot undertake to say with certainty which of the two it is."

She continued silent for a few moments. "I think I told you in my note that I believed I had never had the measles? Are they really catching from a child to a grown-up person?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Heavens! I — I'll have pastiles burnt all over the house all day! Dear me! it would be dreadful if I were to catch it, because," she added hastily, "of dear little Arthur!"

"Well, we must hope for the best," said I, quietly folding up my prescription, and requesting that it might be sent to the druggist's without delay; and hastily taking my leave, with a countenance that, had she been as sensitive as in former times, she might perceive somewhat clouded with disapprobation. Was the mother's heart, then, already so dulled towards her suffering offspring? Could I doubt the selfish nature of her anxieties? What infernal change had come over her? Why did she not instantly order back her carriage, undress, and betake herself to the only place that then became her: the bedside of her child? But it was otherwise. A few minutes after I had quitted, she stepped into her carriage, and drove into the Park. At my suggestion, the elder child, Arthur, was sent off immediately to Mrs. Ogilvie's, who resided somewhere in the neighborhood of Chelsea; and I continued in daily attendance upon little George for about a week, during which time the symptoms were of the milder description, and I anticipated the speedy re



covery of the little patient. Mrs. St. Helen, whenever I was present, evidently — at least I was uncharitable enough to admit the idea — acted the fond mother, *appearing* deeply interested in the progress of her child through his little perils. I had reason to believe, from one or two little circumstances that fell under my observation, that she did not withdraw from the world of pleasure. The

constant attendants upon little George were, not his mother, but Miss Churchill, and his nursery maid Jones, both of them most anxious and affectionate nurses, as, indeed, I heard Mrs. St. Helen herself, in the blandest possible way, acknowledge. Well, indeed, she might, having thus devolved the chiefest of her maternal duties upon the companion she had invited to partake of her pleasures only.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SICK CHILD—THE MOTHER AT THE OPERA.

I THINK it was about ten days after I had been first called in to attend upon little St. Helen, that I was suddenly summoned, about eight o'clock in the evening, to — Street, with the intelligence that he had become very suddenly worse, and that Miss Churchill was much alarmed. Thither I repaired as quickly as possible, and found that appearances justified her apprehensions. There was every symptom of the accession of the malignant form of measles. He had just had a fit of spasms, and was now breathing hard and quickly, and scorched up with fever. The symptoms were certainly serious.

"You must not, however, be too much alarmed, Mrs. St. Helen," said I, hastily turning round, forgetting, at the moment, that she, the most interested, was not present. The child had been going on as well as usual, readily recovering, in fact, till six o'clock that evening; about which time Mrs. St. Helen, after making particular inquiries about the child, went off to dinner at Lady —'s, where she had ordered the carriage to call for her about nine, and convey her to the opera. In their fright Miss Churchill and the servants forgot all this, and instinctively sent off for me. After giving such directions as appeared proper, I quitted the room, beckoning out for a moment Miss Churchill.

"Dear sweet little love! I'm afraid he's very ill," she exclaimed, much agitated and bursting into tears, as she stepped with me for a moment in-

to another room. I acknowledged to her that I considered the child in dangerous circumstances: "Have you sent after Mrs. St. Helen? she ought to be here."

"Dear! we have been all so flurried; but we'll inquire," she replied, running down stairs before me. "I really don't think she's been sent for, but I will immediately. Let me see, nine o'clock. She'll be at the opera by this time."

"Then I will drive thither immediately, as my carriage is here, and bring her back with me. It will not do to alarm her too suddenly, and in such a place. Let me see: on which side of the house is her box?"

"Number —, on the left hand side of the stage. I think, at least, that you will find her in that box, which is the Duchess of —'s, and she called here to-day to offer it to Mrs. St. Helen." I drove off immediately, and had a twofold object in doing so: to acquaint her as soon as possible with an event of such serious importance as the dangerous illness of her child, and to endeavor, in doing so, to startle her out of the infatuation into which I feared she had fallen, to remind her again of the high and holy duties she was beginning to disregard. The sight of the dying child would rouse, I thought, the smothered feelings of the mother, and those would soon excite an agonizing recollection of the distant husband. On arriving at the opera-house, I made my way, in my hurry, to the wrong side. I went into one or two empty boxes be-

fore I discovered my mistake; and when at length I perceived it, I determined to stay for a few moments where I was, and endeavor to see what was going on in the Duchess of ——'s box. There sat, sure enough, in the corner of the box, her face directed towards the stage, Mrs. St. Helen, dressed with her usual elegance, and looking extremely beautiful. Her left hand slowly moved her fan about, and she was evidently occasionally conversing with some one standing far back in the box. I contemplated her with real anguish, when I thought of her husband,—if indeed she were not now a widow,—and of, perhaps, her dying child. My heart almost failed me, and I began to regret having undertaken the painful duty which had brought me where I was. I stretched myself as far forward as I could, to discover, if possible, who was in the box with her, but in vain. Whoever it was that she was talking to, her fan now and then fluttering hurriedly, he, or she, kept as far out of sight as possible. Just as I was quitting my post of observation, however, a sudden motion of a red arm, displaying the feather of an officer's cap, satisfied me that her companion was the execrable Alverley. I now felt an additional repugnance to go through with what I had undertaken; but I hurried round on the opposite side of the house, and soon stood knocking at the door of the Duchess's box. I knocked, and it was immediately opened by—Captain Alverley.

"Is Mrs. St. Helen here?" I whispered. He bowed stiffly, and admitted me. Mrs. St. Helen, on seeing me, reddened violently. Rising from her seat and approaching me, she suddenly grew pale, for she could not but perceive that my features were somewhat discomposed.

"Good, God! Doctor, what brings you here?" she inquired, with increasing trepidation.

"Permit me to ask, sir," said Captain Alverley, interposing with an air of haughty curiosity, "whether any thing has happened to justify the alarm which Mrs. St. Helen" ——

"I don't wish you to be frightened," said I, addressing her, without noticing her companion, or what he had said: I could not overcome my repugnance to him; "but I think you had better return home with me: my carriage is waiting for you."

"Oh my child! my child!" she exclaimed faintly, sinking into her seat again; "what has happened, for God's sake?"

"He is rather worse, suddenly worse, but I think he was better again before I left." She looked eagerly at me, while her countenance seemed blanched to the hue of the white dress she wore. She began to breathe shortly and hurriedly; and I was glad that the loud and merry music which was playing, would, in some measure, drown the shriek I every moment expected to hear her utter. I succeeded, however, with Captain Alverley's assistance, in conveying her to my carriage, which I ordered on to —— Street as fast as possible, for Mrs. St. Helen's excitement threatened to become violent. She sobbed hysterically. "What a cruel, cruel, wretch I have been," she murmured in broken accents, "to be at the—the opera, when my darling is dying!"

"Come, come, Mrs. St. Helen, it is useless to afflict yourself with vain reproaches. You thought, as we all thought, that he was recovering fast, when you set off."

"Oh, but I should never, never, have left his bedside! Oh, if I should lose him! I shall never be able to look my" —— Thus she proceeded, till, overcome with exhaustion, she leaned back, sobbing heavily. As we entered the street in which she lived, she whispered, with evidently a great effort to overcome her agitation,—"Dearest Doctor, I see—I know



what you must think; but I assure, I — I — Captain Alverley had but that moment come into the box, quite unexpectedly to me, and I was extremely vexed and annoyed."

I was glad that the carriage stopping spared me the pain of replying to her. Miss Churchill came running to the carriage, as soon as the hall door had been opened, and almost received Mrs. St. Helen into her arms, for she could hardly stand, her agitation became so suddenly increased.

"Emma, Emma! I do assure he is better: much, a great deal better!" said Miss Churchill, hurrying her along the hall.

"O Jane, I shall die! I am very ill! I cannot bear it! Can you forgive me?"

"Hush, hush! what nonsense you are talking: you rave!" exclaimed Miss Churchill, as we forced Mrs. St. Helen into the dining room, where it was sometime before she was restored to anything like calmness. Mr. —, the well known apothecary, at length coming into the room, to take his departure, strenuously assured us that the children were very greatly relieved, and that he did not now apprehend danger. This I was happy in being able to corroborate, after having stepped up stairs to satisfy my own anxiety; and I left her for the night hoping, but faintly, that a great effort had been made to snap asunder the infernal bands in which Satan, disguised in the shape of Alverley, had bound her. It seemed, however, as though my hopes were justified; for morning, noon and night beheld Mrs. St. Helen at her child's bedside, his zealous, watchful and loving attendant, for upwards of a week. She gave him all his medicine; with her own hands rendered him all the little services his situation required; ordered a peremptory 'not at home' to be answered to all comers except Mrs. Ogilvie; and doubt-

less banished from her busied bosom all thoughts of Captain Alverley.

The morning after I had brought her home, as I have described, from the opera, on stepping into my carriage, I saw a paper lying between the cushions of the seat. Supposing it to be some memorandum or other of my own, I took it up, and with unutterable feelings, read the following, hastily written, in pencil:

"Will you, angel? condemn me to a distant admiration of your solitary beauty? I am here fretting in old —'s box; for mercy's sake rescue me. Only look down and nod, when you have read this, at old —'s box. I shall understand, and rely upon it, will not abuse your kindness."

I tore it with fury into a hundred fragments, and then, recollecting myself, regretted that I had not enclosed it to Mrs. St. Helen in an envelope, with "my compliments," so that she might be sensible of the extent to which I was aware of her guilty secrets. Could there be now any doubt in my mind of the nature of the attentions this villain was paying Mrs. St. Helen, and which she permitted? On reading this infernal missive, she must have "*looked and nodded*," and so summoned the fiend to her side. And now I recollected the falsehood she had had presence of mind enough in the midst of all her agitation to invent, in order to explain away his being with her — that it was "unexpected" to her, and "vexed and annoyed" her. I long debated with myself whether I should communicate to her the nature of the discovery I had made; but at length, for many reasons, thought it better to take no notice of it. I looked at her with totally different feelings and ideas to those with which I had ever before regarded her. I felt as if her presence polluted the chamber of suffering innocence. Her uncommon beauty had thenceforth no attractions for

my eye: I felt no gratification in her gentle and winning manners. I did not regret the arrival of the day fixed for both the children, accompanied by herself, to go to the sea side; it would relieve me of the presence of one whose perfidious conduct daily excited my indignation and disgust. She returned from the sea side, I understood, as soon as she had seen her children settled; I say understood, for I had no direct knowledge of the fact. She gave me no intimation of the safe arrival of her children at the sea side, or of her own return, or how they were going on. On our casual meeting in Oxford Street, she certainly nodded as our carriages met, but it was not the cordial recognition which I had been accustomed to receive from her. I saw that she did not look in good health, her face seemed clouded with anxiety. As, however, she had vouchsafed me no intimation of her return to town beyond the sudden and casual recognition just mentioned, of course I abstained from calling on her. I wondered whether it ever occurred to her as being possible that the note received from Alverley had been dropped in my carriage, and so come under my notice. She might have recollected that she did not destroy it, but rather, perhaps, determined not to destroy it; she might have asked Captain Alverley if he had seen it, they might have searched the box, and then Mrs. St. Helen's guilty soul may have alarmed and worried her with the possibility that such a document might have found its way into my hands; *and if it had*, could I then do nothing to extricate her from the perilous circumstances in which I conceived her to be placed? What right had I to interfere, however keen my suspicions, however sincere my attachment to her, as she was, and to her husband? But might I not endeavor to communicate with General or Mrs. Ogilvie on the sub-

ject? Yet I knew nothing whatever of him, and her I had seen but seldom, and only at Mrs. St. Helen's; and besides, from the evident recrimination that I had interrupted between the sisters in law on a former occasion, it was plain that Mrs. Ogilvie must be aware of the light conduct of Mrs. St. Helen; probably she knew and feared more than I; and so my communication would not appear incredible. Still it might be taken ill, and I resolved not to attempt so dangerous an experiment. As for anonymous letters, that odious system was my abhorrence. Suppose I were to write directly to Mrs. St. Helen, braving all chances, and faithfully expostulating with her on the dreadful course upon which she was too evidently bent? but with what benefit had my former attempts been attended? Suppose she should return my letter with indignation, or even, in a fever of fury, lay it before Captain Alverley? So, seeing no possible way of interfering successfully between the victim and the destroyer, I withdrew from the painful spectacle, and endeavored to discharge it from my mind. Still, however, in my intercourse with society, I was from time to time pained by hearing rumors of the most distressing description concerning the degree of intimacy subsisting between Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen. Scandal was indeed busy with their names, which at length found their way into the papers of the day. Could, for instance, the following be mistaken? "*The eccentric conduct of the lovely wife of a very gallant officer is beginning to attract much notice in the beau monde. It is rumored to have been such as to call forth an intimation from a very high quarter,*" &c. while in one or two less scrupulous newspapers, her name, connected with that of Captain Alverley, was mentioned in the coarsest and most disgusting terms.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ELOPEMENT.

ALAS, poor Colonel St. Helen! — if, indeed, the chances of war had yet spared you: was this the fond and lovely wife you left in such an agony of grief, the mother of your children, she to whom you had confided so much, from whom you were expecting so enthusiastic a welcome after all your brave and dangerous and glorious toils? Better would it be for you to fall gloriously before yon grissly array of muskets, amidst the bellowing of your country's cannon, than survive to meet the dismal scenes which seem preparing for you!

Alas, that I should have to record it! Mrs. St. Helen at length grew so reckless, the consequences of her infamous conduct became so evident, that even some of the less fastidious of the circles in which she moved, found it necessary to exclude her. Public propriety could not be so outraged with impunity.

It was on a lovely Sunday morning May, 18—, on which, returning from an early visit to a patient in the neighborhood of Kensington, I ordered the coachman to walk his horses that I might enjoy the balmy freshness of every thing around, and point out to my little son, who had accompanied me, for the drive's sake, the beauty of Hyde Park, at that point leading off to Kensington Gardens. I could almost have imagined myself fifty miles off in the country. The sun shone serenely out of the blue expanse above upon the bright green shrubs and trees

yet cool and fresh with the morning dew. With the exception of one gentleman who had cantered past us a few minutes before, and a tidy old country-looking dame sitting on one of the benches to rest herself from a long walk to town, we encountered no one. My little chatterer was making some sagacious observations upon the height and number of the trees in Kensington Gardens, when a rumbling, heavy noise indicated the approach of a vehicle at a rapid rate. It proved to be a chariot and four, coming towards us in the direction of Cumberland Gate, tearing along as fast as the postilions could urge their horses. The side-blinds were drawn down, but those in front were up and enabled me to see — Mrs. St. Helen and Captain Alverley! She was violently agitated, her white dress seemed to have been put on in haste and disorder, her hair was dishevelled, she was wringing her hands, and weeping passionately. He was so absorbed with his attempts to pacify her as not to observe me. I drew my breath with difficulty for some moments, the shock of such a dreadful apparition had been so sudden. It seemed as though I had met Satan hurrying away with a fallen Angel!

So, then, this was her ELOPEMENT that I had been fated to see! Yes, the final step had been taken which separated that miserable and guilty being for ever from all that was honorable, virtuous, precious in life; which plunged her into infamy irretrievable; and her husband! her



children! Fiend, thou hadst triumphed!

My exhilaration of spirits, occasioned by the beauty and calmness of the morning, instantly disappeared. It seemed as though a cloud darkened the heavens, and filled my soul with oppressive gloom. "Papa!" exclaimed my little son, rousing me from the reverie into which I had fallen, "what are you thinking about? Are you sorry for that lady and gentleman? I wonder who they are? Why was she crying? Is she ill, do you think?" His questions at length attracted my attention; but I could not answer him, for he reminded me of little Arthur St. Helen, who was just about his age. Poor children! Innocent offspring of an innocent mother, what is to become of you? What direful associations will ever hereafter hang around the name you bear!

About eleven o'clock I drove thro' — Street, and on approaching Mrs. St. Helen's house, perceived indications, even in the street, of something unusual having happened. On drawing up at the door, for I determined to call if only to mention what I had seen, I saw that there were several persons in the drawing room evidently agitated. The servant who opened the door seemed quite bewildered. I was requested to walk up stairs as soon as he had taken up my name, and soon found myself in the drawing room, in the presence of Miss Churchill, General and Mrs. Ogilvie, the Earl and Countess of Hetheringham, and several other relatives and connections of Colonel and Mrs. St. Helen. They were all laboring under great excitement. Mrs. Ogilvie was perfectly frantic, walking to and fro, and wringing her hands, the picture of despair. I addressed myself first to Miss Churchill, who stood nearest me. She took my hand, but suddenly quitted it, overcome with her feelings, and turned away.

"My dear Countess," said I, approaching the Countess of Hetheringham, who was sitting on the sofa, conversing with a lady, her handkerchief now and then raised towards her eyes, but her manner still somewhat stately and composed, "I fear I can guess what has happened, taking a chair opposite to her.

"Eloped, Doctor! she has positively! We are all thunderstruck," she answered, in a low tone. "We were preparing to go to church, when the painful news reached us. We came off hither, and have been here ever since. I have not told any of my daughters."

"Her companion, I suppose" —

"Of course that wretch Captain Alverley. It is a pity he is to succeed to the title and estates. The Earl, by the way, talks of calling him out and so forth. I'll take care he does no such thing, however. Don't you think General Ogilvie should do so, if any one?"

"How and when did she go?" I inquired, affecting not to hear her last observations. "I called to say that I suspected what has happened since I met them this morning early, in the Park."

"Herbert!" exclaimed the Countess, in a less drawling tone than usual, addressing the Earl of Hetheringham, who was conversing with General Ogilvie and another gentleman in a low earnest tone, at the further end of the room, "Doctor — says that he met the fugitives this morning early in the Park."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Earl, earnestly, as they all three approached us. I told them what I had seen, and they listened in silence.

"Do you think we could mention the affair at the Horse Guards?" inquired the Earl, turning to General Ogilvie. "I have a great mind to call on the Commander in Chief tomorrow, and represent the infamous

conduct of his aide-de-camp towards a distinguished brother officer!" The General and his companion shook their heads, and the three presently walked away again to a distant part of the drawing room, where they appeared to resume the conversation which the Countess's summons had interrupted.

"To tell you the truth, Doctor," she continued, "I am not much surprised at her turning out in this way" —

"Heavens! Countess, you astonish me!"

"Her father, you know," continued the frigid Countess, was a very so-so kind of character, and gave her no sort of proper education. I have had my daughters educated in the strictest possible way, quite under my own eye! Mrs. St. Helen I tried to train, when she was with us for a short time, but it was useless. I soon saw it was in vain; and she did my daughters no good while she was with them, I assure you."

"Why, surely, Countess, you never saw anything improper in her conduct while she was under your care?"

"Oh, why, yes — I mean, not perhaps exactly; but to be sure the girl's head was quite turned with the nonsense the men talked to her, as they do to every new girl: they thought her pretty." She paused, but I only bowed.

"'Tis a sad thing for us, Doctor, is it not?" resumed the Countess, "the papers will take care to get hold of it, because of her relationship to us — it is really most unpleasant." At this moment a servant entered and whispered to Miss Churchill, and she, followed by Mrs. Ogilvie, presently quitted the room. "I dare say that is some message about the children," said the Countess, in the same passionless tone and manner she had hitherto preserved: how I pity them, by the way. Poor things, it will be al-

ways flung in their teeth; they'll feel the greatest difficulty in settling in life; I quite feel for them!" sighing gently. "I suppose, by the way, the Colonel will find no difficulty, if he should live to return to England, in obtaining a divorce? But then the exposure is so great!" How long the Countess would have gone on in this strain, I know not; I was heartily tired of it: it seemed, so to speak, utterly out of tune; so I rose and bowed, saying I wished to see Mrs. Ogilvie before I left, as she and Miss Churchill seemed extremely excited and hysterical.

"You will not mention this affair more than you can help, Doctor!" said the Countess, with great dignity.

"Rely on my prudence," I replied carelessly, and quitted the room, perfectly wearied out and disgusted with the tone and manner in which such a dreadful matter was discussed by one who ought to have felt a most painful interest in it. I directed a servant to show me to the room whither Mrs. Ogilvie and Miss Churchill had gone; and was, within a few moments, ushered into the boudoir. How my heart aches as I hastily cast my eye over the numerous little elegancies scattered tastefully about the room; and especially when it fell upon a beautiful full length crayon sketch of Mrs. St. Helen, which hung upon the wall.

"Oh, wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Ogilvie, observing my eye fixed upon it; and walking hastily up to it, she stood for a few moments with her arms stretched out towards it; and then burying her face in her hands, wept as if her heart would break. I rose and turned the picture with its face to the wall.

"My brother! my brave and noble hearted brother!" sobbed Mrs. Ogilvie, and sunk, overpowered with her feelings, into a seat.

"Where is my mamma?" kept continually inquiring little Arthur St.



Helen, whom Miss Churchill was clasping affectionately in her arms, while her tears fell like rain upon his little head. He was the image of his beautiful — fallen, mother.

“She’s gone, gone, my love! You will never see her again!” she murmured.

“But I’ll go and fetch her, if you will only tell me where she is.” Miss Churchill wept, but made no reply.

“Why do you turn my mamma’s picture round that way?” he inquired looking at me with a haughty air, one that most strongly reminded me of his guilty mother. “I love my mamma very dearly, and you shall not do so.” Miss Churchill kissed him with passionate fervor, but made no reply. Mrs. Ogilvie rose and beckoned me to follow her, quitted the boudoir, and stepped into the room adjoining. “Oh, Doctor! of all the dreadful scenes you have ever seen, can any thing equal this? I would rather — indeed I would — have followed my beloved brother and his wife to the grave than lived to see this day! My dear, brave, fond, generous, betrayed brother: read it, if you can! It has quite broken my heart!” and hastily snatching a letter from her bosom, she thrust it into my hands, telling me that Mrs. St. Helen had received it only late last night, and in her hurried flight, which it had perhaps occasioned, had left it upon the floor of her dressing room. The letter was from Colonel to Mrs. St. Helen, and was quite damp — it might be with the tears of agony that had fallen from those who had read it. It was as follows: —

Malta, April 10th, 18—.

“My sweet Emma! Still two thousand envious miles are between us! Oh that I had an angel’s wing to fly to you in a moment! But, alas, that is what I have been wishing a thousand and a thousand times since I left

you, four long years ago. My lovely Emma! idol of my heart, and shall we indeed be ere long re-united? Shall I again clasp my dear beautiful Emma in my arms, never, never, again to be separated? Dearest! a thousand times the wealth of the Indies shall not tempt me again to quit you! I come home a little before my regiment, being a little — mind, love, only a little, of an invalid. Don’t be alarmed, my sweet Emma, for I assure you, upon my honor, that I am quite recovered. The fact is, that I received, in the battle of A—, an ugly wound in my left arm from a musket ball, which confined me to a tent, and to my bed, for nearly six weeks; and Lord —, in the kindest way, wrote to me to insist upon my return to England for a year, in order to recruit. I came overland, and am rather fatigued with my journey. An important matter keeps me at Malta for a week; but in the very next ship I start for merry old England. And how have you been, my dearest Emma? And how are Arthur and George? Why do you say so little about them, and about yourself? But I suppose you have got the common notion, that your letters are opened by others than those they are directed to! How I have guessed what might be the features and expression of my little boys! I have never seen George: is he really like me? By the way, I have brought you some beautiful diamonds! I have almost beggared myself (till I arrive in England) to obtain them for my Emma. How I shall delight to see them upon you!

“Unless something extraordinary should happen, you will see me in about a week after you get this letter — it may be only a day or two after; and, my own Emma, I most particularly wish that you will be alone during the week immediately following your receipt of this letter, for I must



have you all to myself, when we meet — as the Scripture has it, 'with our joy a stranger intermeddleth not.' God bless you, my dearest, dearest Emma! and kiss the dear boys heartily for me! Your fond, doating husband,

"ARTHUR ST. HELEN."

I returned this letter to Mrs. Ogilvie in silence, who, with a heavy sigh, replaced it in her bosom.

"She must have read it," said I, after a pause.

"Yes," she replied, with a shudder of disgust and horror, "and if she felt herself guilty, I wonder she survived it! \* \* \*

"What arrangements have you made with respect to the children?" I inquired.

She replied that she had already given directions for their removal to her house, where she should keep them till her brother's return; trembling as she uttered the last word or two. \* \* \*

"I suppose you have heard some of the many painful rumors as to the conduct of Mrs. St. Helen lately?" said I, in a low tone.

"Yes, oh, yes — infamous woman! But the general and I have been travelling on the continent during the last six months, or he would have taken these poor children away from her contaminating presence, even by force, if necessary. I did frequently expostulate with her in the most urgent manner, but latterly she grew very haughty, and replied to me with great rudeness even."

"Alas, I fear her heart has been long corrupted." She shook her head and sobbed. I mentioned the slip of paper I had picked in my carriage.

"Oh, many many worse things than that have come to our knowledge since we returned from the continent. Her disgraceful conduct drove Miss Churchill from — Street several

months ago. Oh, the scenes even she has been compelled to witness! Is there no punishment for this vile, this abominable Alverley?"

"Can it be true, Mrs. Ogilvie, that the villain has had the execrable meanness to borrow considerable sums of money from Mrs. St. Helen?"

"That also I have heard; that she has wasted the property of my poor betrayed brother and their children, in order to supply his necessities at the gaming table; but I cannot go on, I shall go distracted!"

I ascertained that very late in the preceding night, or rather at an early hour of the morning, Mrs. St. Helen had returned from Vauxhall, accompanied, as usual, by Captain Alverley; and immediately upon her entering the house, the above letter from the Colonel was placed in her hands. Her guilty soul was thunderstruck at the sight of her husband's handwriting. Captain Alverley, who entered with her, opened and read the letter, and would have taken it away with him to destroy, had she not insisted so vehemently on reading it, that he was forced to comply. She swooned before she had read half of the letter. All I could learn of what happened subsequently was, that Captain Alverley left about three o'clock, and returned in little more than an hour's time; that a travelling carriage and four drew up at the door about five o'clock; but such was her agitation and illness, that it was not till nearly half past seven o'clock that Captain Alverley succeeded, after a vain attempt to induce her maid to accompany them, in carrying Mrs. St. Helen into the carriage almost in a state of insensibility. He gave the sullen, incredulous servants to understand that their mistress had been summoned off to meet Colonel St. Helen! She had not ventured into the room where her children were asleep, in blessed unconsciousness of the feat-

ful scenes that were then going forward.

In most of the Monday morning's newspapers appeared the ordinary kind of paragraph announcing the "Elopement in fashionable life,"—some of them mentioning the names of the parties by initials. One of them alluded to Mrs. St. Helen's connection with the family of the Earl of Hetheringham, whom it stated the afflicting event had thrown into the deepest distress," &c., an intimation so intolerably offensive to the pure, fastidious feelings of the Countess, that the day after there appeared the following paragraph. I give verbatim the heartless disclaimer, the tone and style of which may perhaps serve to indicate the distinguished quarter whence it emanated.

"We have been requested, on the very highest authority, to take the earliest possible opportunity of correcting an unintentional and most injurious misstatement that appeared in our yesterday's paper, concerning the truly unfortunate and most distressing affair in — Street, and one that is calculated to wound the feelings of a family of very high distinction. It is not true, but quite contrary to the fact, that the lady, Mrs. \* \* \* \* \* was educated in the family of the Earl of Hetheringham. She is certainly a remote connection of the Earl's, and when extremely young, was received on a visit in his lordship's house till some family arrangements had been completed; but we have been given to understand that the lady in question and the noble family alluded to, have been long alienated, particularly the female branches." In another part of the same paper appeared the intelligence that Mrs. St. — was a lady of great personal beauty and accomplishments, and had

left a family of six children." Another newspaper informed its readers that "the gallant companion of a certain lovely fugitive was the heir presumptive of a peerage and a splendid fortune." A third, "that the late elopement was likely to afford lucrative employment to gentlemen of the long robe." A fourth, "that the husband of a lady, whose recent, &c. was an officer of distinction, had long discarded her, owing to her light conduct, and was now taking steps to procure a divorce," &c. &c. &c. With such matters was, and generally is, titillated the prudent curiosity of fashionable society for a moment only—probably, after a brief interval, its attention being again excited by intimations that "the lady whose elopement lately occasioned much stir in the fashionable circles," had destroyed herself, or betaken herself to most reckless and dishonorable courses, &c.; and that Captain A—— was, they understood, about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Miss —, &c. &c. This, I say, is not an unrequent case; but not such was the course of events consequent upon the enormous wickedness of Mrs. St. Helen.

During Monday the deserted little St. Helens were removed, accompanied by Miss Churchill, to the residence of Mrs. Ogilvie, the General continued at— Street to receive the Colonel when he should arrive, and, in what way he best might, break to him the disastrous intelligence of his wife's infidelity and flight. As it was uncertain when and from what quarter Colonel St. Helen would reach the metropolis, it was of course impossible to anticipate or prevent his arrival at — Street, even had such a measure been desirable.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HUSBAND AND THE CHILDREN.

ON the evening of Thursday, a post-chaise and four, covered with dust, rattled rapidly round the corner of —— Square, and in a few moments the reeking horses stood panting at the door of Colonel St. Helen's. Before either of the postilions could dismount, or the servant open the hall door, or General Ogilvie, who was sitting in the dining room, make his appearance, the chaise door was opened from within, the steps thrust down, and forth sprung a gentleman in dusty travelling costume, his left arm in a sling, and rushed up to the door of the house. While his impatient hand was thundering with the knocker the door was opened.

"Is Mrs. St. Helen?" he commenced in eager and joyful accents, which, however, suddenly ceased at sight of the servant standing, pale as death, trembling and silent.

"Why, what's the matter?" stammered Colonel St. Helen, for he of course it was, "Ah, Ogilvie!" rushing towards the General, who having paused for an instant before presenting himself, now quitted the dining-room and hurried up to the startled Colonel.

"My dear St. Helen!" commenced the General, his agitation apparent. A mighty sigh burst from the swelling bosom of Colonel St. Helen as he suffered himself to be drawn into the dining room.

"What's all this?" he inquired in a hoarse, hard whisper, as General Ogilvie shut the door. He was for a moment tongue-tied at sight of the

long-dreaded apparition which now so suddenly stood before him. The Colonel's face became overspread with a deadly hue as he made the inquiry, and his right hand still locked that of General Ogilvie in its rigid grasp.

"St. Helen, you must bear it like a man and a soldier," at length commenced the General, recovering himself. "The chances of war" —

"Is she dead?" gasped the Colonel, without moving from where he stood, or relaxing his hold of General Ogilvie's hand.

"No," replied the General, turning as pale as his companion.

"Then, what, in the name of God! tell me!" whispered Colonel St. Helen, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets, while the drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. At a word spoken in a low tone by General Ogilvie, the Colonel started as if he had been stabbed, and then lay extended upon the floor. The General sprung to the bell, and shouted violently for assistance. The room was instantly almost filled with servants. One of them was despatched for me, and another for the nearest surgeon. The latter arrived in a very few minutes, and I was in attendance within little less than a quarter of an hour, for the man, knowing my carriage, stopped it as it was entering the street in which I lived. I found Colonel St. Helen propped up in bed in the arms of General Ogilvie, his coat and waistcoat and neck-handkerchief only had been removed, and his shirt-collar thrown open. The heavy snorting



sound that met my ears prepared me for the worst. Colonel St. Helen was in a fit of apoplexy. Within a minute or two after my entrance the jugular vein was opened; that in the arm had given no relief. Oh, that his infamous wife could have been by my side as I gazed upon the lamentable object before me? Here, woman, behold your handiwork!

He had been ever foremost in fight — he had braved death in a thousand forms; the flag of victory had often waved gloriously over him; he had quitted the field with honorable wounds; his grateful country welcomed her gallant disabled son; his affectionate wife, he thought, stretched forth her eager arms to receive him; after months of agony, on the wings of love he had flown seven thousand long miles to be — blasted, as here he lay before me!

Sad sights have I seen in my time, but when one so sad as this? My swelling heart overpowers me. Poor Colonel, what can my art do for thee?

And thou, Alverley, come hither thou, for a moment, slayer of the honor and peace of a brave brother soldier! Quit for a moment the cockatrice, thy companion, to look upon this victim of your united treachery! Oh, out upon thee, thy presence corrupts the air! Down, down to hell! But no, I rave; society will presently welcome you again, gay Alverley, to her harlot bosom!

Though a large opening had been made in the jugular vein, thro' which the blood was flowing copiously, no impression whatever seemed made, or likely to be made, upon the violence of the attack. I therefore recommended opening the turgid temporal artery, which was done, and large blisters to be applied to the nape of the neck and to the extremities, the usual means resorted to in violent apoplectic seizures. I waited for upwards of an hour, and was then obli-

ged to leave my unhappy, but perhaps happily unconscious patient, in apparently the same state as that in which I found him. I paid him another visit early in the morning; still he lay in extreme danger, having been bled twice through the night, but without any sensible effect. I willingly acceded to the General's desire for an immediate consultation with Sir — —, which accordingly took place about two o'clock. The result was that we expressed a strong opinion, that unless a decided change took place in an hour or two, the attack would prove fatal. Why should I wish it, I thought, otherwise? What hopeless anguish would be spared him were he never to awake to a consciousness of the tremendous calamity that had befallen him? What could life henceforth be to him? How could his grievous wounds be healed, or even stanch'd? How could his wrongs be repaired, mitigated, or concealed? What bitter agony would the sight of his children even force into his heart? I thought of all this, and for a moment did not feel anxious that success should attend our strenuous efforts to save him. They succeeded, however, and in three or four days' time it seemed probable that the unhappy sufferer would live to become acquainted with the full extent of his misery, to drain, perhaps, the cup of sorrow to the dregs. I was in the room when his eyes gave almost their first look of returning consciousness. Oh, dreadful contrast to the gay and happy man I last saw him before his departure for India! His hair was now somewhat of an iron grey hue; his complexion had become deeply bronzed by his constant exposure to the rays of an Indian sun. Despite, however, his present extreme exhaustion, and the sunken sallowness of his countenance, it was impossible not to perceive its superior air, the lineaments of that bold and resolute char-

acter for which Colonel St. Helen had ever been distinguished. But where was the wonted fire of those dark eyes that were now directed towards me drowsily and unconsciously? Was he then aware of the cause of his illness, or was the frightful truth breaking bitterly and slowly upon his reviving faculties? God grant that the latter might prove to be the case, or the consequences might be disastrous indeed!

For nearly a fortnight he lay in a kind of lethargy, never once speaking or apparently taking any notice of what was passing about him. Innumerable calls were made at his house and inquiries concerning his health by a large circle of attached and sympathizing friends. His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief sent almost daily to know how he was going on. As soon as I thought it advisable, I intimated my anxious wish that he should have the advantage of a change of scene; and as soon as he was able to be removed, travel by easy stages to Cheltenham. He simply shook his head sorrowfully, at the same time raising his hand as if deprecating the mention of it. Of course I desisted. The next time I called, his female attendant met me on the stairs, and gave me to understand that he had begged the proposal might not be renewed, as he was determined not to quit — street. Before leaving him that day, General Ogilvie followed me, and told me that the Colonel, who had not once made any allusion to what had taken place, suddenly inquired, in the course of the morning, in a faint tone, where his children were, and on being informed, expressed a wish to see them. After some hesitation I consented to their being brought the next day for a few minutes only; the General having assured me that I could not overrate the fortitude of his suffering relative. “Depend upon it he will bear the sight of

them,” said the General, “better than you imagine, though certainly his nerves must have been much shaken. How shall we arrange it? I should very much wish you to be present, Doctor, if you could contrive it.” I promised not only to be present, but that, as I could easily arrange it, I would myself call and bring Mrs. Ogilvie and the children, and so it was decided. The next afternoon, therefore, about three o’clock, on my return from visiting a patient in the neighborhood of General Ogilvie’s residence, I called there, but found Mrs. Ogilvie on the point of going out, not having received any intimation of our arrangement. She instantly, however, agreed to accompany us. “And how are your little nephews?” I inquired.

“Oh, they are very well,” she replied with a sigh; “a child’s grief is not very deep or lasting; Arthur was as merry the next morning after leaving — street, as if nothing had happened. Now and then, however, he asks me where his mamma is, and when he shall go to see her, or when she will come here? But when he sees me sometimes suddenly turn aside my head, to hide the tears that force themselves into my eyes, the poor child thinks that I am angry with him, and kisses me, throwing his arms round my neck, and saying that he will never ask to see his mamma again. He soon, however, forgets his promise,” added Mrs. Ogilvie with emotion. “Here they are at present, as merry as they can be,” she continued, opening the folding doors, and walking into a room that looked upon a pleasant garden. “Alas, that they should ever hear of what has caused all our sorrow!”

The two little boys were romping about upon the grass plot in high glee, running after and rolling over one another. How like the elder one was to his wretched mother! The same



bright blue eye, the same beautifully-formed chin and mouth! I dreaded the effect of his standing suddenly before his father. The younger child, George, as lively as a cricket, and as brown as a berry, bore some little general resemblance to his father.

Oh, how could your mother look upon your little faces, and listen to your prattle, and feel your tiny arms embracing her, and forget that she had borne you? That you were the fruit of her womb! That your little lips had a thousand times drawn nurture from her maternal bosom! All the myriad of delicious agonies and ecstasies of a mother! Her generous, confiding, absent husband! How could she, knowing all this, recollecting all this, deliberately surrender herself to destruction, and prefer the blighting companionship of a fiend, an adulterer!

"Now, Arthur and George," said Mrs. Ogilvie as we approached them in the garden, "you must be good children, and go and get dressed, and I will take you both out."

"What! a drive in the carriage? I love the ponies!" replied George, eagerly.

"Yes, my love, we are going to take you to see papa."

"No, no, I shall not go there. I don't like my papa. He has taken my mamma away."

"No, child, do not talk such nonsense; papa has done no such thing. Poor papa is very ill," replied Mrs. Ogilvie, tremulously, "and wishes to see his little boys."

"I don't know my papa," said the child, ponting, and sidling away from us. "He's a very, very great way off; but if you'll let mamma go with us, then I don't care."

"Your papa," said I, observing Mrs. Ogilvie's emotion, "does not know where your mamma is." The child seemed quite puzzled at all this. "Will you go with us, then?" he inquired, turning to Mrs. Ogilvie.

"Yes, love."

"Isn't my father a very great officer?" he inquired abruptly. "He has killed, oh, such a number of people, I am talk! Do you think he will like to see us?"

"Yes, indeed, Arthur, and he will love you very dearly!" replied Mrs. Ogilvie, with a faltering voice, leading her little nephews into the house. They were not long in being dressed, and we were presently on our way to town. I began to feel rather more apprehensive of the propriety of allowing the interview when I saw how his mother was running in Arthur's head. Suppose he were bluntly to ask his father what had become of her? I whispered my apprehensions to Mrs. Ogilvie, and found them shared by her. She had not seen her brother since his return from India, and declared herself perfectly incapable of bearing an interview with him at present, even were he able to receive her. As we turned into — street, the children became very restless; and when we reached the house, Arthur looked up at it apprehensively, and refused at first to quit the carriage. We succeeded, however, in inducing him to do so, and in pacifying him, and both the children were conducted into the library, where Mrs. Ogilvie undertook to occupy their attention, while I repaired to the Colonel's bedroom, to ascertain how he was. I found him very little changed from what I had seen him on the preceding day, except that there was an evident restlessness and anxiety about the eyes. Probably he was aware that his children had arrived. General Ogilvie, who rarely quitted the chamber of his suffering brother-in-law, sat in his accustomed chair beside. I sat down in the one usually placed for me; while my finger was on his pulse, and my eye on my watch, the Colonel said in a low tone, "They are come, are they not?" I told him they were below.



"Let them be brought up then, if you please, but only one at a time," said he, a faint flush appearing on his cheek. General Ogilvie immediately left the room, but not without first casting an anxious glance at me.

"You are both, I can see, apprehensive on my account," he whispered; "but I am perfectly aware of my situation. He must not be long in the room, however, I may not be so strong as I think myself." In a few moments General Ogilvie returned, leading in his little companion, who entered with evident reluctance, looking with some fear towards the bed where his father lay.

"You are a very good child, Arthur," said I, in a soothing tone, holding out my hand to receive him, inwardly cursing at the moment his resemblance to Mrs. St. Helen, which just then appeared to me stronger than ever. "Come and ask your papa how he is!" The child came and stood between my knees. Can I ever forget the looks with which that father and son, on this their bitter meeting, regarded one another? Neither spoke. It would be in vain to attempt describing that of the former; as for little Arthur, his face showed a mingled expression of apprehension and wonder. "Speak to your papa," I whispered, observing him slowly moving away; "he is very poorly!" He looked at me for a moment, and then faintly exclaimed, gazing at Colonel St. Helen, "Papa, I love you." The poor colonel turned his head away and closed his eyes. In vain he strove to compress his quivering lip; nature would conquer, and the tears soon forced themselves through his closed eyelids. I wish Mrs. St. Helen could have seen the unutterable anguish visible in his features when he turned again to look upon the little countenance so much resembling hers. After gazing thus for some moments in silence upon the child, he whispered, "Kiss me, Arthur." He did so.

"Do you love me?" inquired his father.

"Yes, papa." The Colonel stretched out his arms to embrace his son, but his left arm instantly fell again powerless beside him. He shook his head and sighed.

"Do you recollect me, Arthur?" he inquired. The child looked at me and made no answer.

"Do you love your little brother George?" asked the Colonel languidly.

"Yes, very much; I'll go and fetch him, papa; he will love you, too; he is down stairs." Every fibre of Colonel St. Helen's face quivered with emotion. His eyes overflowed with tears, and he whispered:

"I feel I cannot bear it; he had better go.

"General," said I, "will you take him down stairs? We fatigue Colonel St. Helen." But he made me no answer. He was looking away, and the tears fell. I therefore rose, and after lifting up the child again to kiss his parent, led him down stairs, thankful that he had not tortured his father by any allusion to his wretched and degraded mother. On my return I found Colonel St. Helen much exhausted, and evidently suffering acutely from the distracting feelings excited by his son's presence.

He recovered, but very slowly, during the ensuing month, from as severe an attack of apoplexy as I had ever witnessed. The grief that was preying upon his heart soon showed itself in the settled gloom with which his emaciated features were laden, and which, coupled with his dangerous illness, and the violent remedies we were compelled to adopt in order to subdue it, reduced him almost to a skeleton. He had indeed fallen away most surprisingly. A fine muscular man when in health, he looked now as if he had returned from India in a deep decline. He would sit alone, and speechless, for hours, and took even his ordinary

nourishment with visible reluctance. When his children entered into his presence — they were brought to him daily — he received them with affection, but his manner oppressed them. Alas! he had now no smiles with which to welcome and return any of those little overtures towards cheerfulness; in the midst of any faint attempt at merriment on their part, he would rise and suddenly clasp them to his widowed heart in silent agony.

The manner in which, at a former period of his illness, he had rejected the proposals made to him of a change of scene, prevented its being renewed. One morning, however, he suddenly asked General Ogilvie if he could give him a home for a few months; and on being assured of the affectionate welcome with which he would be received, he expressed a desire to

quit — street on the ensuing morning. He forthwith gave directions for his house, with all its furniture of every description, to be sold; and the clothes, trinkets, and such personal ornaments of Mrs. St. Helen as were in the house he ordered to be destroyed. He exacted a pledge to this effect from General Ogilvie. On its being given he took his arm, and — shadow of his former self! — stepped languidly into the General's carriage, drew down the blinds, and quitted — Street for ever. The day after, in passing the house, I saw great staring bills in the window, and a board on the walls — "This House to be Sold." To this day I never glance at such objects without being suddenly and painfully reminded of the events which are detailed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### PLANS — BUT WHAT NEXT ?

I COULD gain no intelligence whatever of the destination or movements of Mrs. St. Helen; it was generally supposed that she had gone and still remained abroad, in company with Captain Alverley. I expected in each day's paper to hear of her having committed suicide; and for that reason, never omitted to cast my eye over a paragraph headed with "Coroner's Inquest," or "Distressing Suicide." Not so, however; she was reserved for severer sufferings, a more signal punishment, a more lamentable end! Captain Alverley made his appearance in London about six weeks after the elopement; and in passing along St. James's Park, he came upon his Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, who was returning on horse-back from the Horse Guards. He drew up, and motioned Captain Alverley, his aide-de-camp, to approach, rebuked him sternly and indignantly for the cruel and infamous outrage he had committed, commanding him never again to enter his presence. The Duke rode off with a haughty scowl, leaving Captain Alverley apparently thunderstruck. This incident found its way into the next day's papers; and Captain Alverley, perceiving himself in general bad odor, threw up his commission, and withdrew, it was supposed, to the continent. The excellent Duke of York, indeed, evinced from the first the greatest sympathy with Colonel St. Helen; and as soon as he thought he might safely do so, sent him a letter, by a distinguished general officer, also a friend of the

colonel's, full of the kindest and most condescending expressions, and intimating his wish to see him at the Horse Guards at the earliest possible opportunity. He added that he was authorised to state, that his Majesty had expressed a sincere sympathy for his sufferings, and the highest approbation of his gallant conduct abroad. The colonel sighed on reading these flattering communications.

"Tell his Royal Highness," said he, "that I am very grateful for his condescension; and the moment I am able, I will attend him personally and say as much."

"I was not exactly authorized," said Lord —, "to mention it to you, but you are to have the —th; I heard his Royal Highness say as much."

"Pray tell his Royal Highness," replied the colonel, with a melancholy air, "that I cannot accept it; for I return to India by the next ship!"

"Good God! Colonel St. Helen, return to India?" echoed Lord — with an air of infinite astonishment.

"Can I remain in England?" suddenly inquired the colonel, with a look that silenced Lord —, hastily rising and standing for a few moments with his back turned towards him, evidently overpowered by his feelings. Neither spoke for a few moments.

"I cannot tell this to his Royal Highness," said Lord —, "I know he will ask me everything that has passed at our interview."

"Then tell him, my lord, my last words to you were, that my heart is



broken, but my will is not; I shall go to India, if I live, and that as soon as possible."

Lord —— saw that he was inflexible, and abstained from further importunities.

Three months had now elapsed from the day on which Colonel St. Helen arrived in England to encounter so fell a blight of his fondest hopes, his brightest prospects; and he had made his final and gloomy preparations for returning to India. Notwithstanding the sympathizing and affectionate attachment of General and Mrs. Ogilvie, had it not been for the daily sight of his children, those innocent, helpless, deserted beings, whom he himself was about to desert, he would have lost almost all sympathy with mankind. His heart yearned towards his little sons, but his resolution had been taken, and was unchangeable, to return to India, and amidst the scenes of direful carnage he had there witnessed, to seek in an honorable death release from the agonies he suffered. He arranged all his affairs evidently on the basis of his being about to leave England forever. His purposes with reference to his children might have been varied, but for the fond and zealous guardian they found in General and Mrs. Ogilvie. It was not till within a very short period of his departure, that he could bear to ask from the former a detailed account of all that had happened. He heard the name of Alverley mentioned in silence. He inquired for a while where he was supposed to be, and never again alluded to him. The name of Mrs. St. Helen never escaped his lips.

When he presented himself before the Commander in Chief, he met with a most gracious reception. His Royal Highness shook him warmly by the hand, and with a quivering lip assured him of his sympathy and personal regard.

"Is your resolution to return to India, Colonel St. Helen, unalterable?" inquired the Duke. The colonel bowed; his air and manner satisfied the Duke of the uselessness of expostulation. No; in vain were the intreaties of royalty; in vain the passionate tears and embraces of his sister; in vain the energetic remonstrances of General Ogilvie; in vain were his children flung by his sister into his arms and upon his knees in an ecstasy of grief. His darkening countenance told how vain were all such appeals. His passage was engaged in a ship quitting the Thames in a few days' time. His servant had already packed up almost all that was to be taken aboard. The dreaded morning arrived; he tenderly embraced his sister and his children before setting off for town; finally, as he had determined, but only a few hours as they supposed, understanding that he would return in the afternoon to bid them adieu for ever.

When he and General Ogilvie were waiting in a back room at Messrs. ——, the army agents, where he wished to make some final pecuniary arrangements, his eye happened to fall upon a paragraph which he read with almost a suspension of his breath and a face suddenly flushed with excitement.

"Ogilvie!" said he, turning to his astonished brother-in-law a countenance that had quickly become white as death, and speaking in a totally different voice from any that had been heard from him since his illness, "I have changed my mind. I shall not go to India. At all events, not at present."

"I am delighted to hear it," said the General, confounded at the suddenness of the information as much as at the manner in which it was expressed; "but, good God! what has happened? what has agitated you?"

"I am not agitated," replied Colo-

nel St. Helen, with a violent effort to speak calmly, at the same time rising from his chair, and folding up the newspaper he had been reading. "Can you spare this?" said he to the clerk whom he had summoned into the room. He was answered in the affirmative. "Then you may tell Mr. — to give himself no further trouble about the business I called upon; be so good as to tell him that I have made some change in my arrangements. Shall we walk home, Ogilvie?" They quitted Messrs. —'s immediately.

"St. Helen," said General Ogilvie as they left, "I protest that I will not return home with you till you have told me what has occasioned this extraordinary change of manner and purpose."

"My dear Ogilvie, you shall know all; read this," said the colonel, taking out the newspaper, and unfolding it, he pointed out the following paragraph:

"By the death of the Right Hon. Lord Seckington, Captain Alverley, formerly of the — Guards, succeeds to the title and estates, which are great, as well as the splendid accumulations of landed property said to have been made by the late Lord S., who has bequeathed everything to the present Lord Seckington. He is now abroad, but is daily expected in — Street."

"Well!" exclaimed the General, after having read the paragraph twice over in perturbed silence, returning the paper, "of course it is easy to guess your intentions."

"Intentions!" exclaimed Colonel St. Helen with great vivacity; "this is the first time I have breathed freely since my return to England."

"Do you, then, really think of meeting this man?" inquired the General, gravely, after a pause.

"Meet him? Do I intend to meet him? Ogilvie, you vex me!" replied

Colonel St. Helen, briskly and bitterly, at the same time insensibly quickening his pace. He dragged his companion along in silence, at such a rapid rate, that they were half through the Park before either — deeply engaged with his thoughts — had again spoken.

"Let me see, how shall I know when he arrives in London?" said the colonel abruptly, as if he had thought aloud.

"Oh, there cannot be much difficulty about that," replied the General, who had satisfied himself of the hopelessness of attempting to dissuade colonel St. Helen from his evident purpose. "I will do all that you can possibly desire, since" —

"Dear Ogilvie, my dear good brother," said the colonel, with affectionate energy, "do you think I shall permit you to be at all involved in this affair. Mischief may come of it. I cannot deprive my sister and my children of your presence, even for a moment."

"You shall not meet him unless I am at your elbow," interrupted the General with a determined air; "I can be firm, St. Helen, as well as you."

"Ogilvie, Ogilvie, how perfectly useless this is! I do assure you that my mind is fixed unalterably. It cannot be; it shall not be. May I fall at the first fire if I permit you to be on the ground. I could not aim steadily if you were there. No, I have got my man. Darnley will" —

"I hate your professed duellists," interrupted the General, with irrepressible agitation.

"They are made for such an affair as mine," exclaimed Colonel St. Helen, with a kind of cheerfulness that was sickening.

General Ogilvie had never seen so remarkable a change so quickly effected in any one.

"Have you thought of your poor

boys?" said he, as they approached home.

"Thank God that my sister is your wife, that you are my brother in law," exclaimed Colonel St. Helen, in a more subdued tone than that in which he had been hitherto speaking; they cannot be better off!"

"This scoundrel has no such ties! You don't meet on equal terms."

"Perhaps not exactly, but my bullet will spoil his pretty coronet too!" He paused, and a grim smile passed over his features. "Poor devil," he added, with a bitter air, "I would give a trifle to be present when Major Darnley first calls upon him. It will try his mettle, rather, won't it?" almost laughing, but such a laugh.

"Really, St. Helen, this has turned you into a devil!" exclaimed General Ogilvie.

"The best thing that the old Lord Seckington ever did," said Colonel St. Helen to himself, but aloud, as if he had not heard his companion's remark, "was to die exactly when he did die; the best thing that has happened to the new Lord Seckington was, to become Lord Seckington exactly when he did become Lord Seckington; and the next best thing was that I should come to know of it just when I did come to know of it."

"You are certainly, my dear St. Helen, the most cruelly injured man living," said General Ogilvie, after they had walked for some minutes in silence, "and nobody has a right to interfere with you."

"I should think not," replied Colonel St. Helen, in the same bitter tones in which he had been all along speaking. "Ogilvie," he added, turning suddenly and looking him full in the face, "no treachery! By your honor as a soldier and a gentleman, no interference in any way!"

"I should have thought that such an appeal was perfectly unnecessary," replied the General, coldly.

"Oh, forgive me! forgive me, Ogilvie! Remember my sufferings; I was wrong, I know it."

"I have nothing to forgive, St. Helen," replied General Ogilvie, with a quivering lip. "By my God, I will be true to you in every thing."

"And I will be true to myself, Ogilvie. You shall see!" rejoined the Colonel, grasping his hand, and shaking it cordially. "And now, what must we say to my sister to prevent suspicion?"

"Oh, we must say that your ship does not sail for a fortnight, or something of that kind; it will be no difficult thing to deceive her, poor thing!" said the General, with a deep sigh.

"Hardy," said Colonel St. Helen, addressing his groom, whom he had sent for, as soon as he had reached his own room at General Ogilvie's, and putting two guineas into his hand, "go directly and station yourself at the corner of — Street, and watch Number —, which is Lord Seckington's. Say not a word to anybody, but be on the look-out night and day; and the moment that you see a travelling carriage, or anything of that sort, go up to the door, presently inquire who it is that has come; and if you hear that it is Lord Seckington, come off to me at the top of your speed; it shall be the best half-hour's work you ever did in your life; ask quietly, quietly, mind, to see me, and tell me your news. To nobody but me, sir."

Hardy was a keen and faithful fellow; and in about an hour's time he was to be seen lurking about — Street, in exact obedience to his master's orders.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE CHALLENGE.

WHAT I subsequently learnt from several quarters, I may state here, in order to keep up the course of the narrative, and the better to explain the events which remain to be described.

I was right in supposing that Captain Alverley and Mrs. St. Helen went direct to the continent; but of their movements when there I scarce know any thing. Her wild and frantic agonies of remorse at the step she had taken were scarcely calculated to increase the attachment of her heartless companion, whose satiated eye beheld the beauty which had so long fevered his soul daily disappearing. Even had it been otherwise, had she retained all the fascination and loveliness of her manners, the novelty of the affair had worn off; he had gained his object, and she perceived his altering feelings. To her guilty, affrighted soul, indeed,

“The hollow tongue of time —  
— was a perpetual knell. Each stroke  
Pealed for a hope the less: the funeral note  
Of love deep buried without resurrection,  
In the grave of possession.”

When he discovered the incurable nature of her mental sufferings, that whirling her about from one scene of amusement to another failed of its object, he began to complain that his funds were running low. He had, in truth long been greatly embarrassed and involved, yet he had contrived to appear possessed of all the wealth and to enjoy all the luxuries and elegancies that penniless young men of fashion so mysteriously secure for them-

selves. Now, however, the money he had obtained from Mrs. St. Helen, as well as a few hundreds that had been supplied to him by a brother reprobate in order to carry on the intrigue, had almost disappeared. He began to feel himself placed in very awkward circumstances. What is a penniless man of fashion in Paris? Captain Alverley besides was burdened with the perpetual presence of a woman who was weeping bitterly from morning till night, frequently in very violent hysterics, and who vehemently reproached him with being the author of all her misery. He soon began to sicken of all this. Was it for this he had quitted all the pleasures of London, and lost all hopes of advancement in the army? Paris was a very pleasant place, and he could have enjoyed himself there but for his unfortunate and — as he soon felt and expressed it — most disgusting affair. He therefore began to loathe the very sight of his miserable companion. It was unquestionably with a feeling of keen regret that he found her brought home one night dripping from the Seine, after an abortive attempt at self destruction, to which his cold sarcastic repartees had impelled his half-maddened victim. The poor captain was to be pitied: his bold and dashing adventure had turned out most unfortunately. Instead of the brilliant beauty he had reckoned on having secured for at least a year or two in Mrs. St. Helen, he beheld it suddenly withered and gone, and there was ever with him a haggard woman, tear-

ing her hair, wringing her hands, and frantically teasing him with being her destroyer. In vain he sought to escape from it; she would never leave him! He had returned to London to endeavor to raise funds; his unlucky encounter with the Commander in Chief sent him back in fury to Paris. He had never felt himself in such an extremity; and he determined, after much bitter reflection, that could he but once get extricated from this unfortunate adventure, he would never again undertake one on so extensive a scale.

Of a sudden, however, an express from London brought him news that electrified him with delight: a delight which, in the enthusiasm of the moment, he attempted to communicate to his gloomy companion. By the death of his aged uncle he had become Lord Seckington, the proprietor of Seckington Castle in ———shire, one or two other houses in different parts of the country, and a splendid mansion in ——— Street; with a rent roll of upwards of £25,000 a year, and not less than £200,000 in the funds. At the first impulse of his generous feelings, he determined to settle upon Mrs. St. Helen the sum of £500 a year, which he permitted her to spend wherever she chose: offering to give her a thousand pounds in addition if she would not return to England. She began, however, now to be unreasonable, and affected to receive his liberal proposal with consternation.

And was it really, then, possible, that, after all he had said and done, she was not to become Lady Seckington? Even if Colonel St. Helen should take successful proceedings for a divorce? Horror, horror unutterable!

\* \* \* \*

The next communications that reached Lord Seckington consisted chiefly of pressing intreaties from his solicitor, and that of his lamented uncle, the late Lord Seckington, that he

would lose no time in coming to London, as there were many matters requiring his immediate attention. He was glad to see their letters accompanied with one that bore the handwriting of his intimate friend Captain Leicester. He opened it and read thus:

“Dear Seckington—

—Pshaw, how odd it looks! Of course I congratulate you, as every body does. Don't cut your old friends, that's all. But I wish chiefly to say, wait abroad a little, only till the excitement of the story has a little gone down. That d—d unhappy devil St. H——, is in town; but I hear he's going back to India in double quick time. Would it not be as well to wait till he's off, and the coast is clear?

Eternally yours,

“F. LEICESTER.

“The Rt. Hon. Lord Seckington.”

On perusing this well-timed and friendly letter, it suddenly occurred to Lord Seckington that he had certain various matters of importance to settle in different parts of the continent; and so he wrote to his solicitors, infinitely to their astonishment and vexation. He was preparing to set off for Brussels two or three days afterwards, when another letter reached him from the same friendly and vigilant pen:

(Private.)

LONDON, 8th Aug., 18—.

“Dear Seckington,

“What the deuce is in the wind, perhaps you can better guess than I can tell; but I lose no time in writing to say that Colonel St. Helen, who had appointed to sail to India (as I told you in my letter of the other day) and taken leave of every body in a gloomy way, to seek an honorable grave, &c. &c. &c., has suddenly changed his mind, countermanded all

his arrangements, and stops in London!! Every one is amazed at this queer move. I have reason to know that he had actually engaged his passage by a ship that started two or three days ago, and has forfeited all the passage money. This certainly looks cursedly unpleasant: are we to look out for a squall? Do you think he has seen that offensive, impertinent paragraph about you in the papers? and is *waiting for you*? Is so, you are in a d—d awkward predicament, and I really scarce know how to advise you. It will hardly do to keep out of the way a little longer, will it? Ask —, and —, and above all, Count —. Ever yours, more and more.

“F. D.”

As Lord Seckington read this letter, his face gradually became as white as the paper he looked upon. Several letters lay on the table before him, unopened and unattended to. With Captain Leicester's in his hand, he remained motionless for nearly half an hour; at the expiration of which period he was on the point of going into his room, and putting the muzzle of a pistol into his ear. Probably what he endured in that brief interval counterbalanced all the pleasures of his whole life. Lord Seckington was a frightful reprobate, but he was no coward; on the contrary, he was as cool and brave a man as ever wore epaulettes.

But consider his situation. Here he was, scarcely thirty years old, suddenly become a peer of the realm, having succeeded to a very ancient title, and with all appliances and means to boot; all that could secure him ‘honor, wealth, obedience, troops of friends’ — in short, occupying as brilliant a situation as man could well be placed in; yet amidst all the dazzling prospect that was opened before him, his eye lit and settled upon one fell figure only — that of Colonel St.

Helen, standing at ten or twelve paces' distances from him, his outstretched arm steadily pointing a pistol at his head. It was perfectly frightful.

What would he have cared for it in the heyday of his career as Captain Alverley; or indeed as he was only a few short days before, desperately in debt, driven from the army, disgusted with the presence and stunned with the shrieks of a woman he had long loathed; but now — Perdition! The cold sweat stood upon his brow, and he felt sick to death. What was to be done? He could not keep out of the way; the spirit of a man could not endure the idea of such cowardice: no, his coronet should never be defiled by the head of a coward. So there was no alternative. To London he must go, and that without delay, with the all but certainty, that within a few hours after his arrival, Colonel St. Helen would have avenged all the wrongs he had suffered by sending a bullet through the head of him who had inflicted them. These were the dreadful thoughts that were passing through his mind, when the spectre stood suddenly before him, Mrs. St. Helen, who then happened to enter his room: all her beauty gone, a truly lamentable object.

“Well, madam,” commenced Lord Seckington bitterly and fiercely, “I am going to London to be shot at by your d—d husband. He will certainly kill me; that is, if I do not first” — The latter part of his fiendish speech was lost upon Mrs. St. Helen, who had fallen down in a swoon. He immediately summoned assistance into the room, and then quitted it, hastily gathering up his letters; but by some fatality leaving behind him the one which had occasioned him his horrible agonies — Captain Leicester's. It fell into the hands of Mrs. St. Helen's maid, who communicated its direful contents to Mrs. St. Helen, but not



till after Lord Seckington had quitted Paris. He hurried to his bedroom, and after drinking off a large glass of Cogniac, he dressed and set off to consult with one or two "experienced" friends upon the only matter that now occupied his mind: whether the laws of duelling would admit, under the circumstances of this expected meeting with Colonel St. Helen, of his shooting at his antagonist in the first instance, which would afford him, he considered, the only chance he had of saving a life he was just then particularly anxious to preserve.

"You must give him," said Colonel —, a considerable authority in such matters, "two shots, in my opinion, and even a third, if the first two have had no effect; and then you may do as you will."

"Pho!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, with undisguised trepidation.

"Well," replied the Colonel quietly, "you may say, pho! if you like; but you ask my opinion, and you have it. I have known it acted upon several times, and never objected to?"

"Is your friend a good shot?" inquired Count —, a little fire-eater as ever breathed.

"I should say, in all probability, as good as myself."

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, that is very bad! I think you may shoot at your friend at the very first, *by accident!*"

"That's not exactly the way matters are settled in England, Count," interrupted Colonel —, sharply; the vivacious Frenchman retorted; one word led on another, and that evening they went through a little duel scene of their own, Lord Seckington being actually compelled to stand second to his countryman! On returning to his hotel, he found the cards of almost every one of his most distinguished countrymen then residing in Paris lying on his table. He turned sick at heart as he looked up-

on them. He found that Mrs. St. Helen was still in a state of insensibility, and he embraced the opportunity it afforded him of preparing for his immediate departure; but not before he had left sufficient funds to provide for her comfort till he could send her further assistance from London, if indeed she did not first receive intelligence of his death. Early in the morning he set out, with much the same thoughts and feelings as those with which a man might pass through beautiful scenery on his way to the guillotine.

Perhaps it might not be exaggeration to say that he endured the tortures of the damned; and when his post-chaise and four drew up opposite the frowning portals of his house in — Street, he stepped out of it pale as death, and scarce able to conceal his agitation from the obsequious menials who lined the hall to receive their new lord. "How long will they be *mine!*"

As soon as the bustle of his arrival was over, and while the empty chaise was being led away from the door, a groom, who might have been observed loitering about the street, stepped up, gently pulled the area bell, and inquired if that was Lord Seckington who had arrived? He was rather tartly answered in the affirmative by a bustling servant. The groom sauntered carelessly down the street; but as soon as he had turned the corner, he ran as if a pack of beagles had been at his heels, and scarce ever stopped till he reached General Ogilvie's. He succeeded in communicating his pregnant intelligence to Colonel St. Helen without having excited the suspicion of any one in the house, which colonel St. Helen quitted a few minutes afterwards.

About seven o'clock the same evening, a gentleman knocked at the door of Lord Seckington's house. Having been informed that his lordship was

very particularly engaged, the stranger desired to be shown into the library, where he would wait his Lordship's leisure, as he had a very pressing engagement with him. The servant accordingly ushered him into the library, and took up to Lord Seckington the card of "Major Darnley." He had not long to wait; for in less than five minutes the door was opened, and Lord Seckington entered in his dressing gown.

"Major Darnley, I presume?" he inquired, politely advancing towards his visitor, who rose and bowed. Lord Seckington, who looked pale and fatigued with travelling, apologized for his delay in attending the Major, and also for his dress, on the score of his not yet having had time to change it.

"I need only mention the name of Colonel St. Helen, my lord," said Major Darnley in a low tone, "to apprise your lordship of the painful nature of my errand."

"Certainly: I perfectly understand," replied Lord Seckington, rather hastily.

"Of course, my lord, the sooner this affair is settled the better."

"By all means," replied Lord Seckington. "I have no doubt that my friend, Captain Leicester, whom I know to be in town, will act with you immediately in my behalf. Probably he is this moment at ——'s, where you could hardly fail of meeting him," looking at his watch.

"Perhaps your lordship will favor me with a line addressed to Captain Leicester, intimating the nature of my application?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Lord Seckington; and sitting down, he wrote a few lines to the desired effect, and folding up the note, directed it, and gave it to Major Darnley.

"Probably Captain Leicester will be with your lordship shortly: shall I tell him that your lordship waits here for him?"

"I beg you will do me that favor. Pray, Major Darnley, let no time whatever be lost," added Lord Seckington, with a smile that it would have been a luxury to a fiend to witness. He rang the bell, and Major Darnley took his leave. The instant that the door was closed, Lord Seckington, after a sickening glance round at the spacious and splendid apartment, threw himself upon the sofa in a state of mind that it would be in vain to attempt describing.

Having agreed to dine that evening with one of his old friends, who had succeeded to a dukedom since they had met, and who had quitted Lord Seckington only half an hour before Major Darnley's arrival, it became necessary to write off immediately, and announce his inability to be present. He did so, and stated it to be owing to very pressing engagements, and the thought which had since occurred to him that he ought not to dine out till after his uncle's funeral, well knowing that his own funeral might probably take place at the same time. It may be easily understood that he was in no humor to renew the business details which Major Darnley's arrival had interrupted. He sent a message to that effect up stairs to his solicitor, to whom he had promised to return, begging him to be in attendance in the morning; and ordering dinner to be prepared and served at a moment's notice, he again threw himself upon the sofa. He was roused from his dreadful reverie about a quarter before eight o'clock, by Captain Leicester. He was in full dinner dress, having been met by Major Darnley, just as he was preparing to go to the Duke of ——'s, where he was to have been surprised by the appearance of Lord Seckington. After his hurried interview with Major Darnley, he had come off direct to —— Street.

"Well, Alverley — Seckington, I



mean, you see it's just as I suspected," said he, hastily stepping up to Lord Seckington.

"Yes," he replied, shaking him cordially by the hand, and unconsciously sighing. "May I reckon on your services?"

"Oh, of course: I am here on the business now."

"Where were you going when Major Darnley found you?" inquired Lord Seckington, alluding to Captain Leicester's dress.

"The Duke of ——'s."

"Ah, I was to have been there too," said Lord Seckington. "They'll suspect there's something wrong by our both so suddenly sending refusals."

"And let them; they are not likely to send us peace officers if they do suspect. They'll only be devilish sorry to lose the company of two deuced good knives and forks — that's all."

"I have ordered dinner here to be ready at a moment's notice," said Lord Seckington, as the servant brought in candles. He must have observed the troubled and pallid countenance of his lord as he placed them upon the table near which Lord Seckington and captain Leicester were standing. "You can stay to dinner?"

"I think, perhaps I have half an hour to spare," replied captain Leicester — for duellists, like lovers, must eat, it would seem — "but I can't spare one second more, for I've engaged to meet Darnley at ——'s by a quarter to nine o'clock." Lord Seckington rang, and ordered dinner to be served immediately.

"This blood thirsty devil, St. Helen," said Lord Seckington, as the servant closed the door, "must have been watching for my arrival; Major Darnley was with me in less than an hour after I had got into the house."

"Very probably. No doubt he had hired some fellow to lurk about and bring him word of your arrival. You

know, my dear fellow," added captain Leicester, "there's no disguising the thing; we are likely to have damned sharp work on our hands in the morning."

"The morning! I shall go mad if I have to wait all though the night!" exclaimed Lord Seckington vehemently. "D——n me, if I could not infinitely prefer fighting tonight; why could it not be at ——'s? You could easily manage it, Leicester. You really must arrange it so. I shan't have a chance if we wait till the morning."

"You know it can't be done," replied captain Leicester as soon as Lord Seckington had ceased. "It's not *selon la regle* — there's a method in every thing, and duelling is nothing without it. Darnley would laugh at me, if I proposed it."

"Well, I am of course in your hands. You must do as you think proper," said Lord Seckington with a sigh.

"I'll parade you; let me see: five or six o'clock, either will do," said captain Leicester, thoughtfully. — "However, we shall discuss every thing fully tonight at ——'s."

"Did you ever know of such an unhappy devil as I am, Leicester?" exclaimed Lord Seckington abruptly, walking to and fro, "*just now* to be shot."

"Ay, and for such a cause, that's the ugly part of the story; but what does that signify? 'Twas an adventure carried on with the utmost spirit — you could not *command* success, you know: eh? isn't that the word?"

"It's d——d hard to part with all this," exclaimed Lord Seckington, sadly, pointing to the fine library. "Hell must be a joke to what I've suffered since I got your last letter."

"I thought it would have that effect when I was writing it. But," shrugging his shoulders, "the thing's done now, and you must try not to think of it. 'Tis worse than useless.



Make your will, and snap your fingers at every thing, and every body in the world. That's the way a man of sense and spirit should meet death, and then he conquers it. By the way, if you were to make your will it might be as well. There's an infernal heap of money in the funds, you know."

"O Leicester, don't torment me! I shall do what is proper, you may depend upon it."

"Well, my dear fellow, don't take it ill. 'Tis no more than every second should do for his principal when he expects warm work. Of course, St. Helen, you know, will try damned hard to hit you; but, after all, there's no certainty, even with the deadliest shots in the world."

"Oh, curse the ——!" groaned Lord Seckington, coupling Mrs. St. Helen's name with the vilest epithet that could be applied to a woman.

"No, no, Seckington: you forget yourself. I call that very unhand-some; nay, it's ungrateful, it's d—d bad taste," said captain Leicester, seriously.

"You should only know the kind of life she's led me since we went abroad," exclaimed Lord Seckington, vehemently.

"Poor devil, you ought not to speak of her in that way," said captain Leicester with a grave air of displeasure. "Pray remember, Seckington, that whatever she is, you have made her. It is not handsome to speak so of the woman that has denied you nothing, and lost every thing for your sake."

"Well," exclaimed Lord Seckington, after walking violently to and fro, "I suppose I may say that I wish I had been in hell before I had ever seen her."

"Ah, yes; quite another matter; but we mustn't have anything unkind said of poor pretty Mrs. St. Helen."

"Pretty! By ——, you should see her now. Pretty!"

"Well, I hope you have settled something on her."

"Five hundred a year."

"Devilish liberal, certainly. Would she speak to me if we met at Paris?"

Lord Seckington made no reply, but, with his arms folded, kept walking to and fro, heaving heavy sighs.

"Take my advice, Seckington: make a brave effort, and throw it all off your mind. It can you no good; it will do you infinite harm. Fancy yourself plain Charles Alverley, the doged of duns; drop 'my lord,' think nothing of your rent-roll or your funded property; they'll be all the more delightful if you escape tomorrow! Why do you provoke your fate? Hope for the best. Depend upon it you're too good a fellow to be ordered off just in the nick of time: oh, it's impossible!"

Lord Seckington grasped his hands and looked unutterable things.

"You know, Leicester, it is not *death* that I care for, come how or when it may," said he, "I'm a little above *that*, I should hope."

"Don't fear Boggy, then, eh?" interrupted captain Leicester, with a smile.

"Pshaw! But, by the way, what am I to do? how often am I to receive his fire?"

"Ah, I've been considering that point a little. Why, I think twice."

"And I" —

"Fire wide the first time, of course."

"But I don't think it is quite such a matter of *course*, Leicester."

"Oh, nonsense, it's as clear as daylight: trust me."

"Really, it's devilish hard; he'll try to take my life. It's throwing away my only chance. It's going out to be clean murdered!"

"Seckington, put yourself in my place. You know that what I say is the correct thing. It must be so, or I am not responsible. If nothing happens, of course he'll demand another shot; and then you may, perhaps — hem! — I don't say what *you* ought

to do, but I think I know what I should do. And the same if a third is asked for."

"Why the devil does not the fellow announce dinner?" exclaimed Lord Seckington, violently pulling the bell.

"Hush, don't be so feverish. He announced it five minutes ago. I've been on the move ever since. I've now only a quarter of an hour."

Here the servant made his appearance, and Lord Seckington in silence followed his companion to the dining room. Both of them cast one significant glance at the splendor of the side board display, and, indeed, of every thing about them.

"The first time you have ever done the honors here, I presume?" said captain Leicester, as he took his seat.

"It is probably the last," thought Lord Seckington. Alas! what would he have given at that moment to undo what he had done; to have begun nothing of which he had not well considered the end; never to have blasted the happy home of his brave brother soldier; to escape from the mortal thralldom he was now enduring. Perhaps, had he been calm enough, a lesson of his earlier days might have recurred to him before the fearful lesson of the ensuing morning!

"Audire est operæ pretium, procedere recte  
Qui mæchis non vultis — ut omni parti labo-  
rent!  
Utque illis multo corrupta dolore voluptas,  
Atque hæc rara, cadat dura inter sæpe pe-  
ricula!"

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DUEL.

It was settled by the seconds that the meeting should take place at five o'clock on the ensuing morning in Battersea Fields, and as both of them anticipated its turning out a desperate affair, they made all necessary arrangements to meet contingencies, providing for the instant flight of the survivor and themselves, or, it might be, of themselves alone, in the event of anything fatal occurring. Two experienced surgeons also were in attendance. Their arrangements, in short, were admirably made, for they were both of them somewhat experienced in such matters. Within a very moments of each other's arrival were the two hostile parties in the field. Both Colonel St. Helen and Lord Seckington were very finely made men, and of a most gentlemanly appearance. The former was dressed in a blue surtout and light trowsers; the latter in black, black from head to foot, not a spot of color about him, nothing that might possibly serve to point the weapon of his antagonist: a precaution of his thoughtful second of which he had readily availed himself, but which was totally disregarded by Colonel St. Helen. The process of loading was soon got through; the distance, ten paces, duly stepped out by Major Darnley; and there Lord Seckington stood, in fearful contiguity, in the immediate presence of his irreparably injured and mortal foe. Lord Seckington did not attempt to sustain or return the dreadful look with which Colonel St. Helen regarded him. Pistols were quickly placed

in their hands; the seconds withdrew to about a dozen paces.

"Gentlemen, are you ready? — Fire!" exclaimed Major Darnley.

Both pistols were discharged as he uttered the last word, and the principals remained standing unhurt. Lord Seckington fired as he had been enjoined, while colonel St. Helen's ball whistled closely past the chin of his opponent.

"Are you satisfied?" inquired captain Leicester.

"By no means," replied Major Darnley.

They loaded again; again withdrew, having placed fresh pistols in the hands of their respective principals; again was the word given, again both fired simultaneously, but again without effect. It was evident that this time Lord Seckington had followed the example of his opponent, for his ball passed close behind colonel St. Helen's shoulder.

"I presume you are now satisfied?" inquired captain Leicester.

"Certainly not," replied Major Darnley. "I must insist upon a third shot."

"I really cannot permit it" —

"Load again!" exclaimed Lord Seckington in a low tone; and the seconds resumed their gloomy functions.

A third time their principals stood awaiting their signal, and as the word "Fire" escaped from the lips of Major Darnley, both were observed to take deliberate aim. Neither fired till a second or two after the word had



been uttered, when their pistols flashed together, and Lord Seckington prung upwards, and instantly lay extended upon the ground. Colonel St. Helen's ball appeared to have passed through the head of his opponent, while he himself, still convulsively grasping his weapon, remained standing, looking silently and grimly at his prostrate antagonist.

"Fly! For God's sake, fly!" exclaimed Major Darnley, looking towards colonel St. Helen from beside the insensible figure of Lord Seckington.

"Is he killed?" whispered colonel St. Helen; as Major Darnley rushed up to him, repeating his intreaties.

"Yes, yes, I fear he is," replied the Major. "Why, St. Helen! St. Helen! are *you* hit!" Rushing forward, he caught the colonel in his arms, and both fell together on the ground.

The surgeon who had accompanied him to the field was instantly at his

side, and pronounced Colonel St. Helen to have had a fit of apoplexy. Lord Seckington's ball had all but touched the breast of Colonel St. Helen, who with truer and more deadly aim had so directed his ball, that it passed right through the bones of the nose, immediately beneath the eyebrows, carrying away almost the whole of the nasal bones. Lord Seckington was not dead, though perfectly insensible; the wound he had received was one that, if he survived, would occasion him the most frightful disfigurement for life. He was carried insensible to his carriage, a handkerchief having been thrown over his face, and hurried off at the top speed of his four horses to — Street. It was found necessary to bleed Colonel St. Helen on the spot from both arms, and as soon as the incisions had been hastily bandaged up, he was with difficulty conveyed to his carriage, and taken home to General Ogilvie's, a dismal spectacle!

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DESTROYER AND HIS VICTIM — CONCLUSION.

A short time before the carriage containing Lord Seckington reached — Street, a post-chaise drew up opposite to his door, in which were two females, one of whom appeared violently agitated.

“Knock and ring! — ring hard! open the chaise door; make haste!” exclaimed one of them in a breath; and as soon as the hall door was thrown open by the alarmed porter — for all the servants had suspicion of the dreadful nature of the engagement which had taken Lord Seckington away so early in a carriage and four, and were now awaiting his return in the greatest trepidation, she rushed in.

“Is Lord — Lord Seckington — is he at home?” she gasped.

“Yes — no,” replied the affrighted porter in a breath. “Do you know anything about his lordship?” By this time the valet, who had accompanied him to France, and had returned with him, made his appearance, and whispered to the porter, who then, in a somewhat less respectful tone, inquired, “Does his lordship expect you, ma’am?”

“No, my lord does not, I can answer for that,” interposed the valet; “he thinks you’re at this moment in Paris.”

“Silence, sir! show me instantly into the diningroom,” said the lady, as indignantly as her violent agitation would admit of.

“Excuse me, ma’am,” said the porter, placing himself between her and the diningroom door, “I — I cannot admit you. Are you a relation of his lordship’s or what? What’s your business here?”

“Hinder me at your peril, sirrah!” exclaimed Mrs. St. Helen, for she it was, with all her naturally command-

ing tone and manner, and at the same time pushing him gently aside, without further opposition she entered the diningroom.

“Order in my maid from the chaise,” said Mrs. St. Helen, sinking exhausted into the nearest chair scarce able to stand, or to see whether her orders were attended to. There was a sudden muster of servants in the hall for a few moments; and after a hurried conversation together, the dining room door was opened by the valet.

“I hope, ma’am, you won’t make it necessary, ma’am, for us to do our duty. I know, ma’am, who you are,” he commenced with a determined air.

“Audacious wretch!” exclaimed Mrs. St. Helen, roused for a moment by his extraordinary insolence, “if you don’t instantly leave this room, sir” —

“Ah, ma’am, leave the room? Pray, ma’am, are you mistress here? I leave the room, ma’am? You will leave it first, ma’am, I can tell you, if it comes to that — that’s flat!” he continued, pushing wider open the door. “Do you think, ma’am, I’m going to be talked to in this way by you? I know who you are, ma’am, quite well. Do you think I hadn’t my eyes and my ears open at Paris? My Lord’s done the handsome thing by you, and you ought not to come following him about the town in this way; ah, ma’am, you may look, but I fancy my lord’s done with you; he’s got other fish to fry, just now, believe me.” At that moment a vehicle was heard approaching rapidly, and a hubbub in the hall drew the valet thither. “Drive away that chaise!” exclaimed half a dozen voices in the street, and Lord Seckington’s carriage drove up to the door. Mrs. St. Helen sprung to the window,

hearing her chaise ordered away, expecting some new insult was preparing for her; and beheld the miserable figure of Lord Seckington in the act of being carried out of the carriage, his head covered over with a blood-spotted white handkerchief. She rushed from the diningroom, and, with a piercing shriek, was flying down the steps, when one of the agitated servants, either designedly or accidentally, tripped her foot, exclaiming at the same time, "Get out of the way, you d—d —!" and she fell with her forehead upon the corner of one of the steps, where she lay insensible and disregarded till Lord Seckington had been carried in, when the hall door was closed. There she might have continued but for the humanity of one or two persons in the crowd that had gathered round Lord Seckington's carriage. They raised her from the ground; and having been informed from the area that she did not belong there, and that they knew nothing whatever about her, they carried her, still insensible from the stunning effects of her fall and of her violent mental agitation, to the nearest public house, whither her attendant in the chaise followed her. From the representations and intreaties of the latter, the surly publican consented to receive Mrs. St. Helen for the present into his house, and a medical man was sent for.

This was the once beautiful, happy, innocent wife and mother, Emma St. Helen, who had torn herself from her hapless children, her affectionate husband; who had opened her foolish and guilty ear and heart to the tempter; who had fled from the pure arms of her husband to the blasting serpent-like embraces of an adulterer: who could pity her? Here, discarded by the menials of her seducer, she lay dishonored in her extremity among low and unwilling mercenaries; her beauty entirely gone; wasted to a skeleton; heart-broken; paralysed with the dreadful spectacle of her

dead paramor, whose hand had, perhaps, that morning, too, been dyed with the blood of her husband!

It seemed that, as soon as ever she recovered her senses when at Paris, and discovered the departure of Lord Seckington, and learned from her maid the too probable object of his abrupt disappearance, she determined on following him, and engaged a passage in the very next conveyance that started, so as, by travelling night and day, to reach — Street the very morning after Lord Seckington's arrival.

I was called in to attend Colonel St. Helen about ten o'clock, and found him in almost precisely similar circumstances to those in which he had been placed when I formerly attended him, only that the present was a far more serious attack, and the probability of its fatal termination infinitely greater. All our efforts to relieve the laboring brain proved unavailing, and we all gave up the case in despair. On the Saturday evening after his fatal meeting with Lord Seckington, I was returning on horseback from a visit to a distant patient residing about two miles beyond General Ogilvie's house, and determined to call in to inquire after Colonel St. Helen, if he yet survived. When within a few yards of the house, I overtook two men carrying a coffin on their backs. I stopped my horse; my conjectures were right; they opened the General's gate, and went up to the house. So it was at length all over! Poor, broken-hearted St. Helen, victim of the perfidy of the wife of your bosom, of the villainy of your brother soldier, your sorrows were at length ended. After pausing for a few moments I despatched my groom, desiring him to inquire whether they wished to see me. The General sent back word that he particularly wished to see me, and I dismounted. He met me at the door, and with the utmost grief visible in his countenance and manner, told me the event that had taken place. I follow.



ed him into the room we had just quitted, and we sat down together. Colonel St. Helen expired that day about twelve o'clock, only an hour after I had been with him. "He lay," said the General, "in the same state in which you left him, almost to the last, in a dull stupor. I was sitting on one side of the bed, and Mrs. Ogilvie, contrary to my wishes, seeing her excessive agitation, entered the room I had a little before insisted upon her quitting, and resumed the seat she had before occupied on the bedside. The noise she made seemed to rouse him slightly from his lethargy. He slowly opened his eyes, the first time during his illness, and looked dully at her; I think his lips seemed to move, and on bending my ear till it almost reached them, I think I heard the word 'Emma.' His head sunk back upon the pillow, he breathed heavily for a moment or two, and St. Helen was no more! No doubt," continued the General, with great emotion, "he had a confused notion that it was Mrs. St. Helen who was sitting beside him: alas, that such a polluted being should have troubled his last thoughts! Yet there seemed no anger or disgust in his manner; if it had any character at all, it was one of forgiveness!"

He was buried at —, and there was scarcely an officer of distinction in London that did not insist upon following him to the grave. The kind hearted Commander in Chief shed tears, I understood, when he heard of his death. He bequeathed his fortune to his children equally, leaving General and Mrs. Ogilvie their guardians, whom he also empowered to allow Mrs. St. Helen, should she ever require it, such a sum as would place her out of the reach of destitution. The will was dated only the day before that on which he fought with Lord Seckington.

I regret to have to mention that name again, and shall dismiss it briefly and for ever. I did not attend him,

but heard several details concerning him from those who did. It would perhaps have been mercy had Colonel St. Helen's ball passed into his brain and deprived him of life on the spot. It had utterly destroyed the nasal bones; and it is impossible to conceive a more repulsive object than he must have presented to every beholder during the remainder of his days. He endured intolerable agony for many months from his wound; and when at length, through the carelessness of one of his attendants, he suddenly obtained a sight of his countenance in the glass, the dreadful and irremediable disfigurement he had sustained drove him almost to madness. He gnashed his teeth, and yelled the most fearful and blasphemous imprecations, and, in short, to such a pitch of frenzy was he driven by it, that it was found necessary to place him for some time under constraint, lest he should lay violent hands upon himself. He gradually, however, became calmer, and appeared likely in time to become reconciled to his misfortune. Colonel St. Helen was dead: that was *some* gratification! Lord Seckington had still vast solace left him; he was, after all, a peer of the realm; he had a fine, a noble fortune at his command; and these, with other consolatory topics, were urged upon him so frequently and earnestly by his friends and attendants, as at length to satisfy them that they might lay aside their apprehensions, and release him from the painful, the intolerable restraint they had felt it necessary to impose upon him, also relaxing the strictness of their surveillance. They did so; and a day or two afterwards, the event was duly announced in the newspaper as follows: "On the 29th ult., at — Street, in his 32d year, the Rt. Honorable Lord Seckington." It such a thing as a *Coroner's Inquest* took place, the papers took no notice of it; and every body was satisfied that he died in consequence of the

wounds he had received in his duel with Colonel St. Helen.

My pen now moves heavily and reluctantly in tracing these painful, but, I hope, nevertheless, instructive, scenes; my head aches as I recall them: but my long labors now draw to a close.

General and Mrs. Ogilvie, with their little precious charges, (for precious they were, and they were themselves childless,) withdrew, in about a twelvemonth after Colonel St. Helen's death, to a remote part of England, where they might attend exclusively and unremittingly to the important and interesting duties confided to them. Their departure, and the endless absorbing engagements of a busy professional life in the metropolis, caused the gloomy transactions above narrated gradually to disappear from my memory, which, however, they had long and grievously haunted. Three years afterwards, there occurs the following entry in my Diary:

"Wednesday, 8th Oct., 18—."

\* \* But I shall endeavor to describe the scene exactly as it appeared to me. May experience never enable me to describe such another!

"Hush! stand here, Doctor —," whispered Mr. B., the proprietor of an extensive private asylum near the metropolis, where I had called to visit a gentleman who had been long a patient of mine. "Hush, don't speak, nor be at all alarmed," opening a small, and, as it seemed to me, a secret door, "these are my *incurables*. Hark! I think I know what they are about. Step forward, here. Can you see? I did as he directed. From my position I could not see very distinctly, but the room was long and rather narrow, and had a resemblance to a ward in a hospital, with about half a dozen beds on each side of the room, on which were sitting as many boys, apparently from about fifteen to

eighteen years old, wearing long blue dresses, and their hair cut as close to their heads as possible. They were making all manner of discordant noises, and seemed eagerly talking together, but each remained sitting quietly on his own bed; a circumstance I mentioned to Mr. B., expressing my surprise, that so eager and violent as their gestures seemed, they should not quit their beds. "It would be very strange if they *could*," he whispered with a smile, "for they are all fastened to a staple in the wall, by a strong girdle passing round their waists. Bless your life! if it was not for that, they would soon kill one another, and every body that came near them. It was only last month that one of them contrived to twist herself."

"*Herself!*" I whispered in amazement; "what do you mean, Mr. B.?"

"Why, what I say, Doctor, surely — are you not aware that these are women?"

"Gracious God, *women!*" I exclaimed, with a perfect shudder.

"Why, certainly! But, by the way, they don't look much like women either; that close cut hair of theirs is so like the head of a charity schoolboy. Some of these people have been, and in point of family are, highly respectable. It may appear very shocking to you to see them in this condition; it was so to me, until I grew accustomed to it. I assure you we use no unnecessary violence or restraint whatever; but, on the contrary, give them every indulgence their unfortunate condition will admit of. What can we do with them? There are several of them perfect fiends if they have the slightest license. I was obliged to have this room constructed on purpose, apart from the rest of my establishment, their noises were so dreadful; now, hark!"

"Whoo-who-who!" shrieked a voice louder than any of the rest, "who'll go to the moon? who'll go to the moon? who'll go to the moon?"

"I — I've got it!" shouted another. "Pole! Pole! what have you done with the moon?"

"I go for the stars — the stars! Whirr! whirr! whirr! Away! away! away!" cried another.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!" said another voice, bursting into loud laughter, "I've got a dog in my head; hark, how it barks! bow, wow, wow! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a cat; mew! mew! mew! Who'll catch the mouse? I feel it! mew!"

"Water! water! water! The world's on fire! Fire! fire! fire!"

"Hush, you wretches," exclaimed another voice, "I'm going to sing for my dinner: hush! hark!"

"Hark! the song, the song!" cried all the other voices together, while the singer began; and in a few moments her voice only was heard, wild and dismal beyond description, though not very loud, uttering words something like the following:

"Hark to the bell, the merry, merry, merry bell,  
It is his knell, — the merry, merry, merry knell!" —

"Ding, dong! — Ding, dong! — Ding, dong!"

sung the other voices in a kind of doleful chorus. The singer resumed:

"Lullaby! Lullaby! Lullaby!  
His head, oh, his head it is white —  
All white! white!  
— Dead, dead, dead!"

Sing, you wretches!" They resumed:

"Ding, dong! — Ding, dong! — Ding, dong!"

The sun at that moment shone into the dreary room, while I was intently gazing on the miserable scene it disclosed. Mercy! my flesh crept! I began to recognise in the singer, who looked wildly up into the sunshine, I could not be wrong! Mrs. St. Helen!

"Who is that?" I inquired faintly, turning away from the room, while my companion closed and secured the door.

"Mrs. Jones is the performer, if it's she whom you mean."

"Oh no, no, no! Her name is not, it never was Jones!" said I, feeling very faint, and moving as quickly as possible into the open air.

"Well, certainly," said Mr. B., after considering a little, "it is strange enough. I have certainly now and then heard her mention your name, among others. So you know, very probably, her real name, Mrs. St. H——?"

He mentioned the name I dreaded to hear.

"I have had her these two years; she was removed hither from St. —'s by order of General Ogilvie, at whose expense she continues here."

I got into the open air, and began at length to breathe more freely. I protest that I never in my life encountered such a shock as that I had just experienced. He told me many sad, shocking things, which I shall not record.

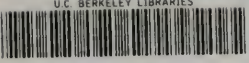
Oh, merciful and just God, governor of the world, sometimes, even in this life, thy most tremendous wrath alights upon the heads of the guilty!







*Gaylord*   
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